



# The Methodist Pulpit

Only a Profession



Edmund H. Hills.

# Only a Profession

And Other Sermons

*By*

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To Emily



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## I.

### ONLY A PROFESSION.

*"And when he came to it he found nothing but leaves."*—MARK XI, 13.

THE Master in His teaching employed the material and visible to illustrate the spiritual and unseen. He laid hold of the common things of everyday life and sent them forth His angels of instruction. The tiny blade of grass, the flower of the field, the bird of the sky, were made to tell of the love and care of the Heavenly Father. Though

"None of the ransomed ever knew  
How deep were the waters crossed,  
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord  
passed through  
Ere He found his sheep that was lost;"

yet when He sought to make men know His love for a race that all like sheep had gone astray, He represented Himself as the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep.

He made the eyes as well as the ears of man aid

Him in imparting the truth. One day, standing in a boat anchored near the shore, He said to the attentive multitude who stood on the shelving bank, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow," and pointed at the same time to a husbandman who was scattering seeds over the fields near at hand. What He said with His lips they saw taking place. Under such circumstances how impressive His warning, "Take heed how ye hear." Another day, seated with His disciples after they had seen the keepers of the vineyards trimming the vines and gathering the branches cut off into heaps and burning them, He said: "I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch can not bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

When He would teach the difference between knowing and doing, He pointed to a building in ruins, whose foundations had been laid in the sand and carried away by a spring torrent, and said: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man who built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house on the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it."

"His sermons were the helpful talk  
That shorter made the mountain walk;  
His wayside texts the flowers and birds,  
Where mingled with his gracious words  
The rustle of the tamarisk tree,  
And ripple wash of Galilee."

A barren fig-tree was the text from which He preached a sermon on the doom of those who are only nominal Christians. The fruit precedes the leaves on the fig-tree, so luxuriant foliage was not so much a promise of fruit as a profession of its presence. The leaves in our text represent a profession

of religion. Fruit represents the spirit life—heart holiness and its results. Do not understand me as teaching that a profession of faith in Christ is not important. It is the duty of every one to confess Christ, by word as well as act. Both the confession of the lip and the life are necessary. “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” There are not many secret Christians. When there is love for Christ in the heart, that love will find expression, “for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” If I warn you against being nominal Christians—trusting in a mere profession of faith in Christ—I must warn you against thinking that it makes no difference whether you confess Christ or not, for He has said, “Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.” Well has Guthrie said: “While in some cases there is a profession of religion without its reality, there is in no case the reality of religion without its profession. There may be leaves and blossoms also on a tree which bears no fruit, but without leaves and blossoms there can be no fruit. The tree which

in high midsummer, when skies are warm, and birds are singing, and flowers are blooming, and woods are green, stands there a skeleton form, with its naked branches, has no life in it. It must be a cumberer of the ground." Both the man who refuses to confess Christ with his mouth, and the one who thinks that a mere profession of faith in Him is sufficient, will come short of eternal life. I never dare to make a profession of religion for a dead man, when he never made such a profession for himself while he lived. The most common delusion of our times is, that one can evade paying a large part of the price of being Christ's disciple and yet be saved. The nominal Christian and the moralist alike need to be reminded that it is not enough to refrain from positive sins. The ax will be laid at the root of the tree that bears evil fruit, and the tree that bears nothing but leaves will also perish. The idle servant in the Scripture is condemned as certainly as the dishonest servant. He who is silent when he should speak at the crisis of a holy cause may be hardly less guilty than the blasphemer. Meroz was cursed because it *did nothing*. The man who bears no good fruit can not be a Christian. Fruit-bearing is the mark of a true Christian. Fruitlessness is the mark of a false one. David, describing the good man,

affirms "that he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season," and our Lord says, "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." No one need have nothing but leaves to offer to the Heavenly Gardener when He comes seeking fruit. God has made it possible for every one to lead a holy, useful life. This is bearing good fruit. Our holiness and usefulness do not depend on our occupying prominent positions or possessing extraordinary talents, but on the consecration of our place and powers to the glory of God. No one is without opportunity to work. The world's labor markets are often over supplied. Men eager to work stand idle in the market places lamenting, "No man hath hired us," but in Christ's field there is always plenty to do. Our Lord's description of the world nearly two thousand years ago represents it to-day, "The harvest truly is great, the laborers are *few*." The opportunity to do good and get good is found everywhere. No one here is denied a chance for attainment and achievement. No day passes that does not open two doors to us, the door to self-improvement and the door to help others. Knowledge is to be sought and treasured. Evil ambitions are to be mastered. The farm,

the forge, the store, the market-place, and every field of honest toil are schools where we can both learn and teach. With a reward promised, even to the cup of cold water given in Christ's name, what a world of beneficent activity opens to us! The poor are to be fed and clothed, the ignorant enlightened, and the discouraged encouraged. If you have any good to offer, you will find a million hearts around that need it.

Great talents are not necessary to render one useful in serving his day and generation. He has been a careless reader of history who has not been impressed with the fact that most of the world's work is done and burdens carried by those who are not "talented."

Many of the most useful ministers I have ever known have not been what is called "gifted." A wise layman, prominent in the councils of our Church, said to me recently: "We have had for several years as our pastor one of the most brilliant orators in Methodism; but we must have for our next pastor a plotdder who will get our children converted." He continued: "I am changing my estimates of preachers. The gifts that make a minister most admired are not those that make him most useful. The men who have done the most for our



Church have not been 'great' men. Every denomination should have some 'star pulpитеers,' but it can not prosper or survive if it has many of them!" As I review a quarter of a century spent in the pastorate, I am compelled to admit that the most useful laymen I have ever known have not been the wealthiest or "brainiest." And I have known not a few of both these classes who have been true disciples and servants of our Lord. The gifts that are necessary for usefulness are the common ones. Albert Barnes has remarked: "One Niagara is enough for the continent or the world, while the same world requires thousands and tens of thousands of silver fountains and gently flowing rivulets, that water every farm and meadow and garden, and that shall flow on every night with their gentle, quiet beauty. It is not by great deeds like those of the martyrs that good is to be done; it is by the daily and quiet virtues of life, the Christian temper, the good qualities of relatives and friends, that it is to be done."

Not only does the Bible teach and our experience prove that we have daily, hourly opportunities for doing and being good, but also that if we strive "to bear the image of the heavenly," "become partakers of the divine nature," "have the mind that was in Christ," and "go about doing good," God

will, by giving us the Holy Spirit, crown our efforts with success. Our most careful plannings, our most diligent labors, will be no more than heaping up a pile of sand that the next wind will scatter if the "Holy Ghost does not put His 'Amen' upon them." It is not by human might or power that we are to succeed, but by God's Spirit. He is offered freely to all who sincerely desire to be obedient to the will and devoted to the person of Jesus Christ. Our Lord said to His followers: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

I heard a scoffer once say mockingly, "It does not seem to take much of a man to be a Christian," referring to one who was so dull that he was but one remove from idiocy, and yet was a sincere, consistent Christian. I thank God that unbeliever's taunt is true. I have no doubt that despised man, stupid almost to the verge of imbecility, has found his way to paradise. But it takes all there is of the most gifted man to be a Christian. "To whom much

is given, of him shall much be required." And many a man of whom the world expects much and Christ demands much, fails because he thinks his talents are so great and many that in his case consecrating them all to the service of God is unnecessary. He who is content to do less than his very best for his Lord, will not be a fruit-bearing Christian. It was a woman who had only two mites—a farthing—who won Christ's commendation for *great giving*. And a man with only one talent may take the prize for faithfulness. If we dream for a moment that a half-hearted service will save us from the doom of the barren fig-tree, St. Peter's words should undeceive us. "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things, is blind and can not see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall."

Now, notice that he who is a Christian in name only is in great danger of self-deception. Many a man makes the fact that he is a member of the Church of Christ an armor against the attacks of the gospel minister. It is easy for men to think that because they are Church members they must be Christians. The man outside of the Church has temptations to which he is exposed. He may be self-righteous, but he does not depend on Church membership to save him. Again, the man who has the form of godliness, but is not possessed of the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, comes to disbelieve in Christ's power to save His people from their sins, as the average worldling does not. He measures the possibilities of grace by his own experience. How can he believe that Christ's yoke is easy and His burden is light, when he finds the forms and ordinances of Christianity so grievous to him? What meaning do Christ's words, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you," have for the man whose soul is tossed by unrest, and yet regards himself a Christian?

Again, to offer to God worship in which there is no love, and to give Him the service of the lip

only, is to outdo in wickedness those who treat with neglect His claims and provoke Him to say, "Why call ye Me Lord, and do not the things I say unto you?"

Finally, he who is not a sincere Christian can do far more harm in the Church than out of it. While Satan will try to keep a man out of the Church who is really converted, and a man out of the ministry who is really called of God to this work, on the other hand he would like to fill the Church with unsaved men and women, and the pulpit with those who are strangers to Christ and His gospel.

One having the form of godliness, but denying or devoid of the power thereof, has an influence to mislead that the non-professor has not. You remember the prophet who appeared suddenly before Jeroboam when he was offering sacrifices on an altar he had set up, not to promote the cause of true religion, but to make secure his own kingdom. Though it was like putting his hand on a fierce, raging lion, the prophet rebuked the king. He braved the disappointment and rage of Jeroboam, and when the king, humbled and repentant, besought the prophet to go to his palace for food and rest and a reward, declined, saying: "If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee,

neither will I eat bread or drink water in this place ; for so it was charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread and drink no water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest." But the man of God, who had not been swerved a hair's-breadth by the threats or bribes of the king, fell a victim to the man who said unto him, "I am a prophet also as thou art." Listening to him he was led to disobey the word of the Lord and perished. A worldling in heart, but wearing the livery of heaven, is most influential in leading "others to pass to the utmost bounds of what is lawful."

And the "next step," according to Tillotson, "will be into that which is unlawful." Formalists in the Church make more doubters and skeptics than do all infidels outside. Where the truth even is held in unrighteousness, there unbelief abounds ; but where the gospel is faithfully preached and practiced, infidelity can not ever be widespread.

With what difficulty are the children of nominal Christians led to Christ ! They see no charms in Christianity. • Their fears are lulled to sleep by the indifference of their parents. Their most dangerous spiritual enemies are they of their own household. We have seen that fruitless Christians are not only useless, but harmful. Does not the small increase

of the Church furnish ground for fear that many of its members are not living in vital union with Jesus Christ? No Church statistics justify boasting, but they do justify heart searching sometimes. A Church that year after year reports either a decrease in membership, or a very small increase at best, surely is not living up to its privileges. That God who did not spare the Jewish Church will not spare us if we are unfruitful. Christ comes seeking fruit. The unfruitful nation or Church or institution will He wither with His Word or cut down with the sharp ax of His judgments. "Every tree that bringeth forth not good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away." "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." O barren tree! not always wilt thou not be spared to cumber thy Lord's ground. Perhaps even now the Heavenly Gardener is saying, "Let it alone this year, and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that cut it down."

## II.

### HOW TO KNOW.

*"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."*—JOHN VII, 17.

MAN in making his pilgrimage through life is journeying over a road that he never traveled before, and one over which he will never pass again. Every day brings him to situations that he is unfamiliar with, to decisions far-reaching in their influence and results. How to guard against irreparable and fatal mistakes and errors is no unimportant matter to him. I assume that he desires to do right. But what is right? is a question that confronts him. Here is a Book that claims to be the Word of the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity, the revelation of the Creator of all things to man. It affirms that God the Father so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. It affirms that Jesus, the Son of God, came into the world,



lived, suffered, died, rose again the third day, ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. Now, how can this man know that this Book is what it claims to be—the Word of God; that Jesus of Nazareth is what this Book claims He is—the Son of God, the Savior of the world? If this Book is the best book in the world, and yet is only the work of men's heads and hands, he does not wish to accept it as an infallible guide in all matters of faith—as a message from the skies.

If Jesus was the wisest and best of men, and only a man, he does not wish to worship Him; but if He is God's best and greatest gift to a perishing, lost world—the Way, the Truth, and the Life; if no man cometh unto the Father but by Him, he does not wish to reject Him. Now, how can this man insure himself against becoming the dupe of superstition on the one hand, or the victim of unbelief on the other? Some men have sought to avoid error and evade responsibility by making some Church their final arbiter concerning doctrine and duty. Whatever their Church teaches, unquestionably they accept; whatever their Church commands, unhesitatingly they do. It is true they attain to a certain

kind of peace; but what a price they pay for it! I say it advisedly, a thousand-fold better know the awful suspense of uncertainty, than arrive at peace by becoming a mental suicide!

Others, because God has not revealed all things, say, "He has made no revelation of His will to man;" because Christianity has mysteries, declare "It is nothing but mystery." They do not deny that man may survive the tomb. They say, "No one knows, or can know that he does."

That must be a community with a small population, indeed, that does not contain these two classes—one refusing to be convinced, even by overwhelming arguments and proofs; the other ready to worship at any altar, if it is only ancient enough!

To me it is inconceivable that there is a God all-wise and loving, and that He has not made a revelation of His will to His creature, man. I can not believe that He has given me the ability to look into your faces and speak in such a way that you understand me, and to my cry for light on my relations to God and obligations to Him and on my duty and destiny He has made no response. To His creations' appeal for light He has not been silent. *He has spoken* to man. The Bible recognizes that some men refuse to admit its claims; but it declares that they

who refuse to be convinced by the proofs it offers and the motives it urges, would remain unconvinced and unmoved though one rose from the dead. The unbeliever lacks not light, but the disposition to come to it. I know some men who seem to think that they are entitled to eternal life because they admit there is a God. The Bible, on the contrary, instead of representing a belief in the existence of God as something especially praiseworthy, an exercise of saving faith, shows that devils go as far as that.

In ten thousand churches this morning men and women rose and reverently said, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord;" and if that means merely a belief in the existence of God the Father and God the Son, devils can truthfully respond, "We also believe." St. James says, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble." The faith entertained by devils surely can not be saving faith. The man who can stand on the mountain overlooking this beautiful city to-night, with the lights from a thousand happy homes flashing on his sight, and say, "I do not believe that there is such a being in the world as man," would be no more unreasonable than the man who to-night gazes up into the heavens that

declare the glory of God and the firmament that showeth His handiwork, and says, "I do not believe there is a God." In one of the famous buildings of the world there is the name of its architect and the reminder, "If you would behold his work, look around you." So we would say to the unbeliever, "Look around you; the earth is full of the goodness and glory of God."

Our text is one of the passages of Scripture that is much better translated in the New than in the Revised Version. The New Version renders this verse, "If any man wills to do the will of God," earnestly and sincerely desires to do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine. Augustus Hare, commenting on these words, says: "It does not say if any man goes to church twice on Sundays and hears sermons, or reads two chapters of the Bible in his home every day, that he shall know of the doctrine. By going to church and hearing sermons on Sunday and reading your Bibles in your home, you can learn what the doctrine is; but by sincerely trying to do it you will learn what is far more important—that it is of God—and feel its heavenly power to save." I am not here to explain away my text. It affirms, if any man wills to do the will of God he shall know of the doctrine. It is a prevalent idea

of our times, that those who saw the works and heard the words of our Lord enjoyed opportunities for arriving at the truth of His claims that are denied us. I believe that we may be as sure that Jesus is the Son of God, that He has risen from the tomb and become the firstfruits of them that sleep, as we would be if He were to appear to us as He did to St. John on the Island of Patmos, resplendently glorious and beautiful, and say: "I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death." It is a different kind of evidence, but it is no less convincing. "He that believeth on the Son hath the witness in himself."

This method for discovering whether the teaching of Jesus Christ is of God, is approved by the practice of every sincere, intelligent searcher after truth in other fields. Some things we can only learn by experience. Suppose I had been born blind, and remained blind till this morning, and then looked out for the first time on the glories of a spring day. This morning's vision would have taught me more what seeing is, than a score of lectures on the laws of optics. Suppose I had never tasted honey till now. Give me one mouthful of Southern California honeycomb, and I would know more about the taste

of honey than I could learn from a hundred addresses.

David says, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." *Some truths we can only learn through experience.*

Now, my complaint against many a man who is honest in others matters, is that he is unfair and insincere when he comes to deal with Christianity. We give no weight to the opinions of a man on any subject who has never taken the trouble to examine it.

It is thirty years since I plowed my last furrow. I did it three thousand miles from here. The seasons, climate, soil, were all different. Suppose I were to go to-morrow to the farm of some intelligent, successful tiller of the soil, and begin to give him advice on how he should manage his farm. I could not say much on such a subject, without showing how little I knew about it. If that farmer is here, and his wife is a Christian and he is not, I can imagine him to-morrow night saying to her: "That minister we heard over at the church last night was out in the field where I was working to-day. You should have heard him run on about farming. He knows nothing about it. If I had no more experience than he has on the subject, I would keep quiet."

Suppose a man who has grown gray in the study of practical chemistry is in this congregation. He is not a Christian. I have forgotten the little I once knew about chemistry. I can not even recall the nomenclature of the subject. To-morrow I repair to his laboratory. I could not speak a minute without exposing my ignorance. Suppose I should offer to settle offhand the questions in his calling that after a lifetime of study and experiment still perplex and baffle him. I imagine him giving his experience with me to his Christian wife: "Well, I had a visitor to-day; the man who preached to us last night lectured to me to-day. If he does not know more about the Bible than he does about chemistry, I never desire to hear him preach again. How can a thoughtful man respect one who presumes to hold opinions and make statements on a subject that he has never taken the trouble to look up?" And he would be right. But what should we say of the man who never has honestly examined and tested the claims of Christianity, and yet entertains and expresses opinions hostile to it? Is that fair? What are his opinions worth under such circumstances? For his own sake, and for the sake of others, he should on a question of such vital importance neglect nothing that will help him arrive at right con-

clusions. Will you employ our Lord's method for the discovery of truth?

Joseph Cook said, "God does not wish any man to pillow his dying head on a guess." God does not wish any man in health to pillow his head on a guess. Our happiness and usefulness, as well as our safety, all make it important that we be sure.

An old Puritan divine has reminded us that the three principal doctrines of Christianity are: Ruin through sin, redemption through Christ, and regeneration through the Holy Ghost. Every man who becomes a Christian proves these. Take the first, Ruin through sin. That is not a doctrine found only in the Bible. As face answereth to face in water, so the daily newspaper, with its stories of deceit and dishonesty and cruelty, confirms the statements of the Bible, that man is a fallen being. It was not a member of an orthodox Church who wrote, "Human history is written with a pen dipped in filth and blood." A man may admit in a general way that he is not as good as he ought to be, and yet not feel greatly depressed by that fact. Here is one who says: "I am not living as I should. I must turn over a new leaf." At first he is more amused than pained by his failure to keep his good resolves. But if he is honest and earnest, I know how it will turn out.



Every day this man gets clearer views of his own weakness and sinfulness, and of the justice and holiness of God, till in an agony of despair, if he had a thousand worlds he would give them all for Christ. The Bible that has condemned him bids him hope. He prays. He knows he is forgiven. A strange peace comes to him. He sings with Charles Wesley:

“How can a sinner know  
His sins on earth forgiven?  
How can my gracious Savior show  
My name inscribed in heaven?

What we have felt and seen,  
With confidence we tell;  
And publish to the sons of men  
The signs infallible.

We who in Christ believe  
That He for us hath died,  
We all His unknown peace receive,  
And feel His blood applied.

Exults our rising soul,  
Disburdened of her load,  
And swells unutterably full  
Of glory and of God.”

The doctrine that a man may know that the teaching of Jesus is of God is true—if it rested on one clear, unmistakable, undisputed passage of Scripture, would be sufficient for a Christian; but it looks reasonable, because:

1. The man who wills to do the will of God will give religion the attention it deserves. Where one man perishes through making intellectual difficulties stumbling-blocks, a score are lost because of sheer neglect of religion.

2. The man who wills to do the will of God will not let a wicked life darken his mind and unfavorably influence his creed. Some one may object that a man's creed influences his life, and not his life affects his creed. Error in life will inevitably be followed by evil thinking.

If I determine to pursue a certain course of conduct, I will be led to attempt to twist all things so that they will harmonize with my course, both to justify myself to myself and to others. There are far more heart difficulties than head difficulties. Hear our Savior: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." Or, again, "How can ye believe, ye that seek honor one of another?" The only way to retain truth is to love it and obey it, as will

be seen from the following: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." A false creed will be the outcome of a vicious life.

3. He who wills to do the will of God will not, by clinging to some sin, make it impossible for God to grant him pardon and peace and purity.

"Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." "If we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us." After entering upon my work in a certain community, a man of some prominence there was terribly mangled by an explosion. He was conscious during the three hours between the accident and his death, but in such pain that he did not speak a connected sentence. Some months later a former pastor said to me: "The death of Mr. A. has made a deep impression on me, because of an experience that I knew he passed through when I was pastor here. At a time when many were being saved he

apparently became deeply interested in the subject of religion. He seemed a most earnest seeker. More than a week passed, and he found no relief. One night, after the congregation had been dismissed and had departed, he remained kneeling at the altar. I bent over him and said: "Mr. A., is there any one against whom you are holding a grudge? If you are unwilling to forgive, God will not forgive you." He replied, 'I am ready to forgive all my enemies.' I continued, 'Mr. A., have you ever wronged any one in business and not made it right?' He sprang to his feet and replied, 'Do you mean that if I have cheated any one that I must pay him back?' I answered, 'If you have another man's money in your pocket, God will not touch you till you have made restitution, or are willing to do so as far as in your power to do so.' While faithfully urging him to yield up his ill-gotten gains he said to me: 'I have not an honest cent in the world. If I were to do what you say God requires it would beggar me.' He grew sullen, and went out of the church and ceased from that night to be a frequenter of the house of the Lord, declaring that he had 'tried Christianity, and that there is nothing in it.' He became an awful example of the Scriptures, 'He that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck

shall *suddenly* be destroyed, and that without remedy.' ”

4. He who wills to do the will of God will not be wanting in that teachable spirit upon which God has promised His blessing.

The Bible abounds in promises to the meek. “The meek will He guide in judgment; the meek will He teach His way.” “If thou incline thine ear to wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.”

In Cardinal Newman’s “Lead, kindly Light,” he shows why many a one remains in darkness when he sings :

“I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou  
Shouldst lead me on;  
I loved to choose and see my path; but now  
Lead Thou me on!  
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,  
Pride ruled my will.”

Celia Thatcher has told us how a little child taught her the way :

“The childish voice rose to my ear,  
Sweet toned and eager, praying me  
‘I am so little, Granny, dear,  
Please lift me up so I can see!’

I looked down at the pleading face,  
Felt the small hands' entreating touch,  
And, stooping, caught in swift embrace  
The baby boy I loved so much,

And held him up that he might gaze  
At the great pageant of the sky,  
The glory of the sunset's blaze,  
The glittering moon that curved on high.

With speechless love I clasped him close,  
And read their beauty in his eyes,  
And on his fair cheek kissed the rose,  
Sweeter than blooms of Paradise.

And in my heart his eager prayer  
Found echo, and the self-same cry  
Rose from its depths through heaven's air,  
O, gracious Father, lift me high!

So little and so low am I,  
Among earth's mists I call to Thee,  
Show me the splendors of Thy sky!  
O, lift me up, that I may see!"

If ANY man wills to do the will of God he shall know of the doctrine. I care not what his temperament, intellectual peculiarity, or education may be, If he is open-minded and open-hearted and earnest, the outcome will be he will recognize in Jesus of Nazareth the Savior of the world, and cry with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" There is much speculation about truth that is insincere. We have a book, a translation from the German. I wish it

had a less sensational title. It is called "Letters from Hell." Its logic is inexorable. It represents Philip, who had lived a selfish life on the earth, as being in the abode of lost spirits. There is a river of lies in that unhappy world, fed by lies from the earth; for, according to the theory of this book, every lie, like every liar, goes to hell. I suppose about election time it overflows its banks! As Philip was wandering disconsolate along the river of lies he saw a man vainly trying to wash the blood-stains from his hands. When Philip drew near the stranger said to him, "What is truth?" and Philip recognized in his questioner Pilate,—Pilate washing his hands in the river of lies and asking, "What is truth?" He who is unwilling to obey the truth will not long retain the truth he possesses. The man who holds the truth in unrighteousness will soon be walking in darkness. On the other hand, if you are obedient to the light you have, it will surely be increased.

"Though weary deserts we may tread,  
Dreary perplexities may thread,  
Through dark ways underground be led,  
Yet if we will our Guide obey,  
The dreariest path, the darkest day,  
Will issue forth in heavenly day."

I heard Miss Sarah Smiley relate a very instructive and impressive story. She had been holding a series of meetings in a wild section of the South twenty miles from a railroad. One night the meetings closed, and with a timid girl companion and an unknown driver she began her journey. The night was intensely dark. The road was rough. She could not see anything around her. The wagon pitched and plunged. She was against the driver. She thought he had fallen asleep, and she chided him for being so indifferent to their safety, when he replied, "I am finding my way through the sky." She *looked up* and saw through the dense underbrush what had hitherto been hidden from her—the way. Believe me, God has revealed many things to the upturned face and uplifted heart that are hidden from the worldly wise and prudent. Every step toward Jesus is a step toward the light, for He has said, "I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."



### III.

#### THE ALL-CONQUERING CHRIST.

*"For He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet."*—I COR. XV, 25.

ABOUT nineteen hundred years ago One who was cradled in a manger, "who had not where to lay His head," who was crucified on a malefactor's cross, "at whose death men shouted for joy as if a curse had been swept from the earth," and whose body lay for some three days in a borrowed tomb, established a new system of religion. This man, if I may call Him man, so humble in condition, so mighty in word and work, making such astonishing claims and demands for Himself, asserted that He had come from heaven to complete God's plan for the salvation of man. He declared that His mission was to destroy all the works of the devil; that He had come to bring light to the benighted, joy to the sorrowing, hope to the despairing, and holiness to the sinful; that He had come to overthrow every wrong, and to make straight earth's many crooked

paths. He predicted that the kingdom He founded would be everywhere spoken against and assailed on every side; that its first advocates would seal their testimony with their blood, but that in the face of all opposition it would advance, that notwithstanding persecution it would spread. When He spake His parting words to His disciples on Mount Olivet, He said to them: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." As if He had said to them, "Go and take the world for Me." This command is addressed to all Christians, in every age, until every human being is converted. He who said, "Go preach to every creature," added, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The command and the promise reach unto the end. Well has Dr. Van Dyke said: "The Church of Jesus Christ was founded as a missionary enterprise. It was not intended to stand still, but to 'Go.' It was not intended to be self-contained, but to 'make disciples and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' It was not intended to be silent, but to 'teach the things' that Christ

commanded. It is the very essence of Christianity that it is an advancing, conquering religion. The Church is the body in which the Spirit of Christ is to live and work. The Spirit of Christ is *missions*. 'When that Spirit wanes, the Church is sick; when that Spirit dies, the Church expires.' "

A failure to enter heartily into the task and trust committed to the Church by her Lord involves the forfeiture of her original charter with all its glorious provisions and promises. But to fail to enter the "open door" does more even than this. God, who spake to us from Olivet by His Son, in these latter days has been speaking to the Church by Providence and the pleadings of the Holy Ghost. The Church can now refuse to give herself to the undertaking, to which her Lord gave Himself, *only* by being disobedient to the heavenly vision of "a new earth!"

At the time that Jesus of Nazareth gave this command and promise to His followers they only numbered a few hundreds. Some years later a man who had once been a bitter opposer and persecutor of the new faith, but who had in the meantime become a Christian, was writing to a little body of believers. During these years there had been growth, but yet very little to encourage one who puts

value only upon the things that can be seen. From a human standpoint, the history, doctrines, and the advocates of this new religion, all seemed to make its successful propagation an impossibility. Its advocates were few, and poor and despised and unlearned. Some one has told us that twelve coolie Chinamen, landing at San Francisco, purposing to change the faith of the people of the United States, from a human standpoint, would not be entering upon a more hopeless and desperate undertaking than that of the first disciples. Moreover, Christianity was a faith that was opposed to every other system of religion. It was the policy of ancient Rome, when she conquered a people, to leave them their religion intact; nay, more, to put their god in the list of deities to be worshiped; but she could not do this with Christianity, for it was a faith that refused to compromise with any other religious system. It declared that it would be satisfied with nothing short of the complete overthrow of every other religion. Christians were not content to have Jesus worshiped as one of many gods, because they claimed the whole world for their Master, and that all other gods were false. Hence there has been an irrepressible conflict going on for nearly nineteen

centuries, which can only cease when every other religion has been destroyed, and Jesus has put all enemies under His feet. As Hugh Stowell says: "The priest, the sophist, the philosopher and politician, the polytheist and the atheist, were all arrayed against the Gospel. To the Jew it was 'a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.' The worldly-wise exclaimed, 'What will these babblers say?' and the skeptical, 'They seem to be setters forth of strange gods.' Besides all these arrayed against them, the soldiers of the cross had everywhere to contend with the corrupt heart of man. They came not to make peace with sin, but to wage a war of extermination against it. They came not to flatter, but to humble; not to indulge man, but to require him to deny himself; not to allure men, as did Mohammed, to a paradise of sensuality, but to teach a religion that binds its disciples to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts; to bow the pride of their reason and the iron sinew of their will at the feet of the crucified One,—a system that challenges the most complete submission of the understanding, while it demands the unsparing mortification of the passions. They entered into no compromise with their opponents. They never sophisticated; never disguised the distasteful truth. They knew no re-

serve; they determined to know nothing among Gentiles or Jews but 'Christ and Him crucified.'"

When St. Paul penned my text to the Church at Corinth, Christianity had gained only a feeble foothold in a few of the great cities of the world. If he looked toward his own country he saw Judaism entrenched behind wealth, numbers, social power, and prejudice. If he looked toward Greece and Rome he saw a classic heathen temple crowning many a hilltop and nestling in many a valley. Yet he was as confident of the triumph of Christ's cause as he could have been if he, like St. John on Patmos, had heard the heavenly voice crying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever." In the fifteenth chapter of his first letter to the Church at Corinth St. Paul repeatedly speaks of the headship and government of Jesus. Inspired of God he looks into the future and beholds the long struggle between right and wrong. He sees sin defeated, death a captive, every foe overcome, Christ King over all, and he exclaims, "For He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet." He beholds the time when Christ will lay down His mediatorial office and shall become the judge of the quick and the dead, and he beholds

Him resigning up to His Father the universal dominion given Him when He wrought out on the cross the salvation of the race. But before this He is to triumph over the world. The Gospel He sent His disciples to preach is to become the faith of all nations. The central truth of our text is that Christ is to win the world to Himself—that Christianity is to become the universal religion of the earth. The Old and New Testaments are full of this doctrine. St. Paul's words, "For He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet," seem to be an echo of Isaiah's words, also referring to Christ, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment on the earth." The words of the apostle and the words of the prophet are as much in harmony as are "two strings of a seraph's harp,"—Christ victorious, the doctrine of both the old and the new dispensations. In the very first book of the Bible we find God declaring that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. He told Abraham that in his seed, which is Christ, all nations of the earth should be blessed. In the Psalms we are told that God has given the heathen to His Son for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. Isaiah prophesied: "It shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's

house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it." A time will come when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the seas. While many prophecies show that Christ's kingdom is to fill the earth, the beginning of that kingdom is humble and seemingly insignificant. David was unconsciously prophesying of a greater kingdom than Solomon's when he wrote: "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure forever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things." In another place this kingdom is represented as a small stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, increasing until it filled the whole earth. Jesus Himself represented it as a grain of mustard seed or a little leaven. That the kingdom which our Lord founded, and whose final and complete triumph He predicted, will fail to subdue the whole earth no Christian can believe. No one who accepts the Bible ever doubts the success of the Re-



deemer's cause if he does not take counsel of his fears, instead of the word of the Lord. For this patriarchs have waited, and saints have prayed, and apostles toiled, and martyrs died. For this the millions of the Church militant daily pray when they say, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as in heaven." This hope has glowed in the bosoms of the men who, in Christian or in heathen fields, have been most honored with success by the Master. When the Church or individual Christian is living close to God this conception is clear and distinct. In times of spiritual decline it grows dim. When the Church, filled with the missionary spirit, with the Bible in her heart and hands, has gone forth to carry on the work that she is commissioned to do, she felt that final victory is certain, and has voiced her desire and faith in such hymns as—

"Soon may the last glad song arise,  
Through all the millions of the skies;  
That song of triumph which records  
That all the earth is now the Lord's.

Let thrones and powers and kingdoms be  
Obedient, mighty God, to thee;  
And over land, and stream, and main,  
Now wave the scepter of thy reign."

However, some good men, overlooking God's promises and the resources of the Captain of our

salvation, and seeing only the foes that oppose, seem to think that the only thing that remains to be done is to make a successful retreat, like Xenophon's ten thousand Greeks. But it was not for this that Jesus sent forth His soldiers, but to wage a war of conquest

"Till not one rebel heart remains,  
But over all the Savior reigns."

Take away the hope of final victory from the Church, and she is already more than half defeated. Let the belief become general among Christians that Christianity has no further victories to win, that her mission henceforth is simply to hold what she has gained, and that the Gospel is not able to cope with the world's evil and secure the world's conversion, and the very heart of missionary effort will cease to beat. Pity for the heathen may remain. But those who pour out their money for the missionary cause, and who cry unto God day and night for the unsaved, or who hasten to heathen lands with the story of Calvary, will have, mingling with pity for the heathen, love for Christ and zeal to promote His cause and faith in His ultimate triumph.

But it may be asked, What do you mean by Christ's winning this world for Himself? I mean that a time will come when a knowledge of the true

God will be universal; when human law will be in accord with divine law; when sin, the fruitful mother of tyranny and war and disease, will be banished from the earth, the rod of the oppressor broken, the sword of the warrior laid aside, every need supplied, every tear wiped away; when earth will become a reflection of heaven. To banish sorrow and sin, poverty and pain from the world, however hopeless the undertaking may appear to some, all will admit is the consummation of everything glorious in human ambition and effort. How men have longed for the time when millions now trained and supported to wage war, ready to spring at one another's throats, will be free to engage in beneficent and peaceful pursuits; when they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; "when," as the poet sings,

"Some sweet bird of the south  
Shall build in every cannon's mouth,  
Till the only sound from its rusty throat  
Shall be the wren's or bluebird's note."

How thousands worse than widowed and orphaned have sighed for the time when no one will put the cup that destroys to his neighbor's lips!

Will the time never come when, in place of the fierceness of competitive strife and drudgery driven to death, there will be co-operation and mutual helpfulness? Yes, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. Since we find this doctrine taught in the Bible, even if we had nothing else, this ought to be sufficient to convince and satisfy us. But if we look at Christianity itself and its history, how much there is to confirm our faith! We find it adapted to meet the wants and needs of the race; not the people of one land only, but of all lands. Every inquiry of men in earnest is answered, every longing and yearning for holiness is satisfied in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Though you are familiar with the trials and triumphs of the Church in the past, yet a brief review of them will not be without profit. Though we do not yet see all things put under the feet of our Master, yet for eighteen hundred years He has been doing it. Though the prophecy of our text has not been fulfilled, yet it is being fulfilled. Were I to ask, "What is the greatest foe to the propagation of true religion, and therefore to the Christianization of the world?" I would receive very different answers from intelligent Christians. One would reply, "Idolatry or paganism is the greatest foe to overcome." Another, "Ecclesiastical corruption and

tyranny as represented by the Church of Rome." Still another thinks that learned unbelief is most to be feared. We have been recently reminded that these undoubtedly are the trinity of foes that oppose the advance of Christ's cause. What success has the Church had in battling with these enemies in the past? All she holds she has won from them. Early Rome and Greece were pagan nations. The former was the conqueror of the known world. The latter became the teacher of those who had subdued her. "One ruled the bodies, the other the minds of men. The rhetoricians and logicians, the orators and poets, the sculptors of ancient Greece have never been surpassed, if they have ever been equaled, by those of any other people. Against the cause of Jesus, Rome representing the physical and Greece the intellectual power of the world united, humanly speaking, there was never a more unequal contest." What was the result of the contest? As Dr. Cumming has said, "Starting at the empty tomb of their Lord, the first ambassadors of Christianity went forth to subdue the earth, with no patronage but an open world, and no help but in Him who had promised to be with them. Weakness prevailed against might, and few against many, and the lone fishers of Galilee against the Cæsars. Humility over-

threw pride, and love triumphed over hatred, and naked truth, the unarmed child, overcame the Macedonian phalanx and the Roman legion and Satanic hosts, until the vine of Israel shot up and gracefully wound its tendrils around the scepter and mingled them with the laurels of the Cæsars, and at length the hated religion of a corner of the Roman Empire became the faith of countless nations and the hope and stay and joy of humanity." But the soldiers of the cross were not only victorious over Rome and Greece, but also over the wild and savage hordes that conquered these countries. Hispania, Gaul, and the countries of the north were subdued. Druidism, with its bloody rites, gave place to the religion of gentleness and love. The brave and bloodthirsty Norsemen were tamed by the story of the cross.

We who are assembled here to-day are the descendants of the most cruel and savage pagans that the world has ever known. Surely *we* should not despair concerning the cause of missions. I have not the heart or the time to notice the long night of papal darkness, when papal Rome persecuted God's people with a cruelty that surpassed pagan Rome. A second time the blood of martyrs became the seed of the true Church. God raised up Luther, who won for the world civil and religious liberty. Some think

that the wave of the Reformation has spent its force—that the tides of the world's forces are setting towards Romanism again. This is not true. I am not here to tell you that the Romish Church is not a foe to the cross and crown of our Lord Jesus Christ. I do not share in the belief that she has been so liberalized that she has ceased to be a menace to civil and religious liberty. *Semper idem*—always the same—is her boast. She is the same on the Hudson that she is on the Tiber. Her blasphemous claims have not abated one jot. The tireless energy that has sent her spies and emissaries into the most secret gatherings has not changed. The plotting disposition that caused her to send her secret agents into the ministry of the different Protestant denominations, that she might better know when and where to strike a sudden and deadly blow, is the same. She is as grasping for power at Albany as at Rome, and if she does not use the arguments she once employed, it is because she dare not employ them. "Rome has a brain as ready to plot, a heart as cruel as ever; but her hand, so often extended to vex the nations, has lost much of its power. Her vile sorceries, with which she bewitched the nations, have lost and are losing much of their accursed spell." In the chief city of her power over a half-score of

Protestant churches have been reared, and the number is constantly increasing. The papal authorities are filled with alarm. Italy has declared for civil and religious liberty ; Spain has begun to wake from the sleep of centuries. The pure Word of God is being preached in a few places in that beautiful but benighted land. Protestantism on the one hand, and infidelity on the other, are undermining her in France. Cathedrals, formerly her property in Mexico, now resound with Protestant preaching and teaching. In the United States she only holds her own by the immigration of thousands of her devotees annually from other lands. She has lost more to Protestantism in Italy and Mexico alone in five years than she has gained from Protestantism in all lands in ten years. The number of earnest, sincere men in her fold is growing daily who insist upon her returning to the faith once delivered unto the saints, and if reform within fails will leave her communion. Rome's cathedrals, many of them marvels of the architect's skill, will yet resound with the preaching of the Gospel, and "sinners will there be pointed, not to Mary, but to Mary's Son."

Now let us consider the position of modern infidelity. In a hundred years there has never been a time before when there were so few infidels rela-



tively as now. The timid have been alarmed by the boastings and pretentious claims of these men. A single secular university in the Empire State has now more students who are members of Evangelical Churches than all the colleges and universities of the country contained a century ago.

Our modern infidels are only the pupils of the ancient pagan Greek and Roman philosophers who were vanquished by the early Church fathers. There is not a single philosophical argument urged against Christianity to-day that was not advanced and refuted over a thousand years ago. Macaulay, who was a thorough master of Greek and Roman history, literature, and philosophy, well remarks: "Christianity is not now left for the first time to rely on the force of its own evidences and the attraction of its own beauty. Its sublime theology confounded the Grecian schools in the fair conflict of reason with reason. The bravest and wisest of the Cæsars found their arms and their policy unavailing when opposed to the weapons that were not carnal, and to the kingdom that was not of this world. The victory that Porphyry and Diocletian failed to gain is not to all appearance reserved for any of those who have in this age directed their attacks against the last restraint of the powerful and the last hope of the wretched."

Let us now turn for a few moments to the condition of our foreign missionary work. At a time since the birth of some now living those enterprises were inaugurated. Some high in authority mocked and opposed when it was proposed to send the Gospel to the heathen. You remember Dr. Ryland's command to Carey, when he began to plead the cause of the heathen: "Young man, sit down! When God pleases to convert the heathen he will do it without your help or mine." Sydney Smith—an example of some who now call themselves Christians and yet oppose Foreign Missions—unrebuked said to a man who, with more love for Christ and the perishing than his associates, was taking his life in his hands in going to preach the Gospel to cannibals, "I hope that you will not disagree with the man who eats you."

But how great the change of sentiment in the Church on the question of missions since those days! . And what hath God wrought through the missionary cause in sixty years! The Gospel has not lost its power to save savage men.

Many of you remember how we were thrilled years ago by Bishop Warren's testimony at our Conference love-feast, when he told of having met and heard in the great London love-feast, where the

representatives of universal Methodism were gathered together, men who had not forgotten the taste of human flesh, who had once been cannibals, tell of the love of Jesus.

There is hardly a triumph of the Cross recorded in the Acts of the Apostles that I can not find a parallel to in the history of our own times. The men who are standing out on the picket-line of Christ's army in China, Japan, India, and Africa, all send back the same cheering tidings, "The morning cometh."

Bishop Thoburn, if his life is spared for half a score of years, hopes to help storm the gates of hell with a million native Methodists in India.

The fifteen thousand Chinese saints who laid down their lives for Jesus in the recent Boxer outburst show how widespread and genuine is the work in that land.

And yet there has been much advance and growth that is simply preparatory to greater successes.

God has kept the doors of heathen nations closed until He had a Church that would take the Word of Life to them. He has been getting His hosts ready for the great battle soon to be fought. As Bishop Simpson said: "The Christian army has been drilled and equipped, and is, I believe, to make such an

advance as the world has never seen. Roman roads and the protection of her government preceded Christianity's first great march. The steamship and the railroad, tunneling mountains and spanning continents, the telegraph with its multitudinous wires encircling the earth in its network, the mastery of all languages, the triumph of science and art, to me portend the coming of an era of universal light and glory."

After eighteen hundred years much of the earth yet remains to be won for our Lord Jesus Christ; but a general survey shows that Christian nations hold the wealth, power, and learning of the world. In the last ninety days the rulers of the five greatest nations of the globe have humbly knelt at the table of the Nazarene, as though unworthy to eat the crumbs that fell from it—a prophecy of the time when all crowns and hearts shall be at His feet. When Columbus discovered the river Orinoco, some one said that he had found an island. He replied: "No such river as that flows from an island. That mighty torrent must drain the waters of a continent." When I consider the humble origin of Christianity, her doctrines, her advocates, the foes she has met, the victories she has won, I know that she is of God. A wisdom greater than man's has

directed; an arm stronger than man's has delivered her. This river that gladdens and refreshes the whole world has not an earthly source. It flows from the throne of God. Pity for the perishing and love for the Master summons us to this work. If we obey not Christ's command, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations," the heathen must perish. Christ's heart is set on saving the world. He has not only opened the gates of heathen nations to our missionaries, but He has sent the heathen by the tens of thousands to us for the Word of Life. In the work of winning the world to Christ America is called upon to take a part second to none. And the favor that our Lord has shown, and the success He has given our division of His army, ought to make us sensible of our responsibility to be among the very first in planting His flag over every stronghold of Satan. If we make full proof of our ministry in seeking and saving the lost, our trust will be enlarged. If we prove unfaithful, our Church, that looks with grateful pride on the past and with high hopes on the future, will perish. The doom of unfaithfulness will overtake her.

We look to China, and India, and Japan, and the Isles of the Sea, and behold the supplicating hands stretched out to us, and hear the cry, "Come over

and help us." We may not be able to go in person. But look at that other company, made up of thousands of our most gifted and godly young men and women. They have heard that cry from heathen lands. Their hands are extended to us, too, as they plead, "Help us to go; O send us!" We can not plead ignorance of our Lord's command, of the needs of the heathen world, or our inability to help. Dives was no more certainly judged and punished for his selfishness than we shall be if we refuse a helping hand and turn a deaf ear to the nations naked and hungry and dying at our gates. You can not go to China; but you can, if you have an ordinary income, support a preacher there who will not have to learn the customs or language of China. A man in average circumstances can support a native preacher in China, Japan, and India, or put a teacher to teaching, or a bed in a hospital to healing, or a press to printing there! We shall meet the Christ and the multitudes that He has bidden us go to! May we be so faithful in life's brief harvest day that we can call God to witness that we have done what we could to obey the One and save the others.

May we prove good soldiers of the faith, that we may join in the shout and share in the joy of the great victory of the Captain of our salvation!

## IV.

### THE NATION'S MEMORIAL.

*"Shall be spoken of for a memorial."*—MARK XIV, 9.

It was in Bethany, just before our Lord laid down His life to save the world. A woman whose heart was full of gratitude and love brought a box of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and she broke the box and poured the ointment upon His head. A man who was a traitor in heart and a thief in act condemned her. But Jesus commended what Judas had condemned. He saw that even our selfish world would not forget her work, wrought with no thought of gain or fame. He decreed her immortality for this and the heavenly world, when He said: "She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint My body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done, shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." The more than eighteen centuries that have passed since then have buried in oblivion the names

of many who held place and power. Students of history have sought in vain to discover the names of kings who since that time have ruled over kingdoms. Monuments reared to commemorate the names and deeds of the great have crumbled to dust, or the languages in which the inscriptions were written have shared the fate of all things earthly and died. Who in this audience can repeat the names of the women who were famed in Jerusalem, Alexandria, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome eighteen hundred years ago for wit, wealth, or beauty? History preserves the names of but a few of them. But Mary's act and name is known in every land. And after the stars have dropped out of the skies her name will be held in everlasting remembrance. From this event we learn that not only are the poor to be fed, the ignorant instructed, the vicious reclaimed, evil to be exposed and opposed, but that good men are to be honored while they live. It is not enough that we build monuments to the memory of dead prophets and patriots. Those reformers in Church and State who are fighting the battles of truth and liberty deserve our co-operation, honor, and love. I have chosen the words I read to you a few minutes ago as a text, not because I wish to dwell at length upon the event they record, but because they furnish an appropriate



motto for my text this evening, "The Nation's Memorial to Her Preservers, Dead and Living." Affection and religion have united in almost every age and land in teaching man that the dead have some claims upon the living. As one has said,\* "It is an instinct of man that funeral rites should accompany his body to his long home. The ancient heathen could not cross the river Styx and reach the Elysian fields if his body lacked the proper ceremonies of sepulture. However hasty the flight of the living, he must still pause long enough to throw three handfuls of dust upon the corpse of his comrade and pronounce a solemn hail and farewell. Otherwise that companion must wander a hundred years on 'the shaded side of the land of shades ere he find repose and bliss.'" The pagan, Mohammedan, and Christian, so different in religious faith, alike regard as hallowed ground the place where rest the ashes of the loved dead. What tender memories, what inspiring hopes cluster around it! Love, robbed by death of all she prized and cherished, save their dust and memory, seeks some spot where she can guard the one and rear monuments to perpetuate the other. Nature's loveliest nooks and retreats have been set apart for the villages and cities of the dead, where

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\*Gilbert Haven.

the mourner in quiet can weep and hope and pray. In at least some instances the inscriptions over the dead to commemorate their greatness and goodness have saved the nations that wrote them from oblivion. What treasures the archæologist has exhumed from the tombs and sepulchers of Egypt! The mortuary records of ancient Assyria, Babylon, and Persia have made us familiar with the life, customs, religions, literature, and political changes of those nations so distant in time and space. But next Thursday we are called not to visit and strew with flowers the graves of those who left our homes, but the sleeping places of those who laid down or periled their lives that "the Government of the people, by the people, and for the people might not perish from the earth." Foremost in this work of honoring the memory of those to whom the country is so much indebted is the Grand Army of the Republic. One of the objects of this order is "To perpetuate the memory and history of the dead." Its purpose and spirit is set forth in the following declarations of principles: "To maintain true allegiance to the United States of America, based upon a paramount respect for, and fidelity to, the national constitution and laws: to discountenance whatever tends to weaken loyalty, incites to insurrection, treason, or

rebellion, or in any manner impairs the efficiency and permanence of our free institutions; and to encourage the spread of universal liberty, equal rights, and justice to all men." It is very fitting that those who survived the exposures and perils of the late war should meet at least once a year to strew the graves of their dead comrades with flowers, and live over again the scenes which constitute, and forever must constitute, to them the most important part of their lives. But the services of Decoration-day should not be left to the survivors of the late war. We should count participating in them the common privilege of us all. Churches deserted and in ruins are evidence of the decline of piety in a community. The graves of public benefactors covered with weeds and unmarked by any token of a people's gratitude are equally convincing proofs of the decay of patriotism. The nation that persecutes her living heroes or neglects the graves of her dead ones, is not far from national degradation and extinction. The nation that forgets her sons who gave their lives to save her, deserves to perish. On the other hand, no people who hold in lively and lasting remembrance the services and sacrifices of their country's benefactors, are slaves in spirit or can long be held in subjection to tyrants. The one nation of Europe

that has a day set apart as sacred to the memory of the men who laid down their lives in her defense, has been a nation that has never remained in bondage to any tyrant, foreign or domestic. Switzerland has looked down for centuries from her rocky fastness, and has seen every country of continental Europe save herself overrun and laid waste by foreign armies. But her sons can truthfully say, "We have never been in bondage to any man." "It is the universal custom of that nation of freemen to go out every year on the anniversaries of their great national battles, and on the battle-field, with prayer and song, and solemn discourse, commemorate the deeds of those who struggled there." Five hundred and ninety years ago at Morgarten fourteen hundred Swiss defeated fifteen thousand Austrians and broke the yoke of Austrian rule. Five hundred and nineteen years ago at Sempach, Switzerland completed what she began at Morgarten. Every year on the sixth of December at Morgarten, and on the ninth of July at Sempach, with song and prayer and devout speech the brave sons of brave sires celebrate the events that took place more than half a thousand years ago. Christians insist, and rightly too, that without a Sabbath Christianity would perish. If Piety needs one day in seven to enforce the claims

of God, shall we begrudge patriotism two or three days in the year in which to make the young familiar with the glorious history of their country and teach them what they owe to their native land? The spirit that condemns as sentimental and foolish the services of Decoration-day, is the same spirit that condemned Mary's gift to her Savior as extravagant. But there is an observance of Decoration-day that we do not advocate, but oppose. It has become too common of late to spend the day in revelry and merry-making. To those who had loved ones go out to the war who never came back, or came back to die of wounds or diseases; to the men who passed through the tempest and whirlwind of battle and yet survive, to them Decoration-day can never be a day of frolic and mirth, but a day of solemn memories and hallowed associations. By your offerings and presence next Thursday help make the observance of Decoration-day general. But not for the sake of the dead only let us keep green their memory, though we can do little to add to the renown of that host whose "tents on fame's eternal camping-ground are spread." To forget or neglect them, is to show that we have no fellowship with the spirit that made them heroes and patriots. We can hardly overestimate for good their example in influencing

this and succeeding generations. The good we have received from other ages is rendered more precious, and therefore more secure, by the knowledge of what it has cost. England has no greater treasure than Westminster Abbey with its memories of courage and devotion, a spot that holds the ashes of her wisest, bravest, and most unselfish sons. There philanthropy, patriotism, and piety have their shrines. Those who say that England owes her naval supremacy entirely to her insular position, forget the spirit that the exploits of Nelson and Drake have inspired in the breasts of her seamen has done much to make her "mistress of the wave." Think you, would civil liberty be so secure in our land, if we were to forget those fields plowed with cannon, harrowed with lightning, drenched with blood, and planted with our country's noblest slain? We can hardly overestimate the influence upon the future of America of the loyalty displayed, when the doorposts of the temple of liberty were sprinkled with the life-blood of one from almost every Northern home that the angel of death might pass her by. The relation between past ages and our own is intimate and vital.

" From the bards of the elder ages  
Fragments of song float by,  
Like flowers in the streams of summer,  
Or stars in the midnight sky.

Some plumes in the dust are scattered,  
Where the eagles of Persia flew,  
And wisdom is reaped from the furrows  
The plow of the Roman drew.

From the white tents of the Crusaders  
The phantoms of glory are gone,  
But the zeal of the barefooted hermit  
In humanity's heart lives on."

But it may be urged that a Christian Church and the holy Sabbath is not the place or time for such a theme. I answer, no place or time is too sacred to honor patriotism. That is a false Christianity that affects indifference to the duties of citizenship. Piety and patriotism can not be divorced. There have been patriots who have not been Christians, but as some one has said: "Religious men have ever proved the truest patriots. The cause of freedom has owed more to them than any other class. They have ever fought best and bravest in their country's battles who sought another one, and strong in faith, at peace with God, and sustained by the hopes of immortality, were careless whether, as one of our martyrs expressed it, they rotted in the earth or air, died amid holy prayer, or amid the shouts of battle and the roar of cannon." But it has been urged that the observance of Decoration-day tends to keep alive the old sectional feuds. This is an

objection much urged by a class rightly described as having been "invincible in peace and invisible in war." These carpers make a plea that our brethren of the South would despise us if we listened to it. We owe it to the men who laid down their lives in the holy cause of freedom and humanity to keep in remembrance their achievements. Let us review briefly some of the things which they did. Two civilizations confronted each other. The South was determined to maintain and extend slavery. Many in the North were willing to make any concession for peace. There was, however, a small body of men who regarded human slavery as a sin, and protested against it. The Anti-slavery Society, though at first small in numbers, was made up of men who were not wanting in eloquence and courage. Rewards were offered for their heads by the Legislatures of some of the slave States. Their meetings were broken up. Owen Lovejoy and others sealed their testimony with their blood. Ministers advocating anti-slavery sentiments were reprovèd and suspended by their conservative brethren, and at a time when we "had no answer but a blow or a blush" to the taunts of tyrants in Europe who contrasted our creed with our practice, some ministers even in the North tried to prove from the Bible that human



slavery is right. But all the time the spirit of freedom was growing in the North. The public conscience was being quickened. What seemed to some men of those days a trivial event precipitated the conflict that was inevitable. Two representative men, one from the North and the other from the South, both men of clear vision, have declared that John Brown's attempt at Harper's Ferry convinced the slave States that slavery was doomed if they remained parts of the Nation. The enthusiast and his handful of supporters were quickly put down, but as Bishop Haven says: "There ran one feeling, one fear, one Belshazzar sense of awful guilt, awful weakness, and awful punishment throughout the South. They slept but little before; they slept less after." The slave States seized upon the election of Mr. Lincoln as a pretext for an attempt to destroy the National Government. When the struggle began in 1861, few on either side anticipated that the war would be so long and fiercely contested. The North was not ripe for the emancipation of the slaves. But when the months of bloodshed and carnage stretched out into years, and our soldiers were able to win only partial victories, one man among our great men (and he the greatest of them all) had the wisdom to perceive that God would not prosper our cause while

the wrongs of three millions of slaves cried to heaven against us for redress. He had the courage to voice the better sentiment of the North, and say, "Let the enslaved go free." The Proclamation of Emancipation by Abraham Lincoln, on the first day of January, 1863, was the beginning of the end. He finished the work that the men who wrote the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States began, or rather the soldiers who carried it into effect for him did. It may be urged that this was only a war measure. It was more. It was a confession that we had been guilty of a great national sin, and if the God of battles would give success to our arms that we would forever put it away. God saw our repentance, and the cause of human slavery went down in the tempest and whirlwind of battle. But the war decided more than that the Government of our fathers should be perpetuated and that the enslaved should go free. It made labor honorable throughout the length and breadth of the land. Before the war the laboring man had to find his associates among the slaves. He who soiled his hands with toil was regarded as socially unclean. But now, how changed! The South is growing rich and prosperous through the labor of men who twenty-five years ago dreaded labor more than they

did the leprosy. The war not only decided for free labor, but for free speech as well. Within a score and a half of years, in one-third of the States of the Union a man took his life in his hands who gave utterance to sentiments opposed to those held by the people there. This spirit has not altogether disappeared, but is fast going. Who will say that we can honor too much the men who saved the Nation, broke the shackles from the slaves, made labor honorable, and speech free? But the greatness of our soldiers was as much displayed by what they refrained from doing, as by what they did. The victors showed themselves as merciful, as they had proved themselves brave. Not one suffered capital punishment for treason. Not one served even a long term of imprisonment. None were driven into exile. To me that part of the history of our soldiers which is most often overlooked, their self-restraint in the day of final victory, is no less worthy of eulogy than their courage and constancy on the battle-field. The men who composed our armies were thinking men. In no other armies has there ever been gathered so much learning and culture. He did not exaggerate who said:\* "On the march, around the camp-fire, in the hospital and prison, and in letters

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\* Chauncey Depew.

to friends at home, these men discussed the issues at stake, and the results which would follow defeat or victory, with as much statesmanship and prophetic force as the representatives in Congress. Of the million volunteer soldiers, thousands were fitted by culture, ability, and character to be Presidents of the United States."

It will be in vain that we build monuments to the good and brave of our own and other generations, if we are unwilling to serve our own day and generation.

Certain dangers menace the well-being of the Nation. I am not an alarmist, but I regard some symptoms of our social and political life with the gravest apprehensions. I refer to one—assaults upon the rights of the weak.

A law was enacted by Congress some years ago, and is still in force, that no intelligent lover of his country can think of without pain and shame. The Anti-Chinese bill exposes us to the deserved contempt of all civilized nations. It strikes a blow at the very foundation principle of our Government, at our commerce in the East, and at every American missionary in China. This bill represents not the best sentiment of this country; it is the spirit that persecutes the Jew in Russia. Creed prejudices and

persecution we all feel are unjustifiable; race prejudice and persecution are no more so.

Such legislation breathes the spirit of the sandlots, and not of the Sermon on the Mount and the Declaration of Independence. To teach that the "Government of the people, by the people, and for the people" is for white men only, is to give the lie to everything glorious in our history and traditions. Soldiers of the Grand Army of the Republic, I appeal to you, the comrades of the men who died to make the enslaved free, as far as in you lies, to see that they did not die in vain!

It gives me much pleasure to greet and welcome you here. We are here to honor the defenders of our country. Shall we withhold our reverence and love from Him who laid down His life to save the world? It is one of the glories of your order, that it teaches the duty of loyalty to an earthly government. Let us live in loving loyalty to that of God.

Let us not forget the living in honoring those who deserve well of the country. I think good men of all parties are united in the feeling that every man who periled his life for the old flag should be protected from poverty in his old age, and that in the distribution of places of trust and honor he who has served his country on the battle-field should be

preferred. It is a pity that this feeling does not more often have an expression. A few years ago, in a city of Central New York, I witnessed a scene that convinced me that patriotism would not die out of this land for a generation at least. A regiment that had served through the late war, which had been enlisted from the towns of that county, had a reunion. The streets were lined with pleasure-seekers, but here and there I saw groups of men and women who turned pale, and whose eyes filled with tears as they looked upon flags bullet-riddled and battle-grimed, which had been carried through many a field of strife, and under which a father, son, brother, or lover had made his last march. I thought as I looked upon them, "None but lovers of our country will be reared in the homes from which these have come." But the whole Nation is bound by every obligation to keep green the memory of the dead and guard the land our heroes saved.

"From the lily of love that uncloses  
In the glow of a festival kiss,  
On the wind that is heavy with roses,  
And shrill with the bugles of bliss,  
Let it float o'er the mystical ocean  
That breaks on the kingdom of night—  
Our oath of eternal devotion  
To the heroes that died for the right.

They loved as we loved, yet they parted  
From all that man's spirit can prize :  
Left woman and child broken-hearted,  
Staring up to the pitiless skies ;  
Left the tumult of youth, the sweet guerdon  
Hope promised to conquer from fate—  
Gave all, for the agonized burden  
Of death for the flag of the State !

Ah ! grander in doom-stricken glory  
Thou the greatest that linger behind ;  
They shall live in perpetual story,  
Who saved the last hope of mankind ;  
For their cause was the cause of the races  
That languished in slavery's night,  
And the death that was pale in their faces  
Has filled the whole world with its light.

To the clouds and the mountains we breathe it,  
To the freedom of planet and star ;  
Let the tempests of ocean enwreath it ;  
Let the winds of the night bear it far,  
Our oath that, till manhood shall perish  
And honor and virtue are sped,  
We are true to the cause that they cherished,  
And eternally true to the dead."

## V.

### AS HE THINKETH IN HIS HEART.

*"For as he thinketh in his heart so is he."*—PROV.  
XXIII, 7.

AS MATTHEW HENRY would say, "The key to the meaning of our text hangs at the door. Who desires, let him enter."

This is the picture that Solomon places before us. A man has made a feast. So pressing are his invitations—so warm his welcome, so liberal and choice the viands he has prepared for his guests—that they and we think, "Here is large-hearted hospitality." But the wise man bids us look beneath the smiles on the face, and behind the honeyed words on the lips of the maker of the feast, to his thoughts, and, lo! we see a scheming miser. He grudges every morsel those around his table eat, and every drop they drink. If his guests knew his feelings towards them and his designs upon them, they would hasten from the presence of this host who seems a generous friend, but who in fact seeks to put them



under obligations he will never deem discharged, though they repay them a thousand times and fold. He only keeps an account of what he has done for others—never what they have done for him; hence all men with whom he comes in contact are perpetual debtors to him! In short, Solomon reminds us that a man can not be judged by a solitary utterance or act. We must know the inmost thinking that is behind the word and deed, if we would be just to the speaker or doer. The thoughts of a man determine his character, his conduct, and ultimately his destiny.

You can measure him mentally by his thoughts. If they are habitually trivial, he is frivolous.

You can measure him morally by his thoughts. If they are habitually wanting in loyalty to God and love to man, he does not live the white life. What is his dominant thought, aim, and desire? He may have genius—learning—such perseverance that no task is large enough to discourage him, no danger great enough to daunt him, but if he lacks one thing he will never be really great in attainment or achievement. Hear St. Paul give us the ultimate test of character: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And

though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge: and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

God is not deceived concerning loveless deeds, and men at last are not. God knoweth our thoughts; therefore His apprizement of us is not the estimate others put upon us, or that we put upon ourselves. He weigheth our deeds, because He has already weighed our thoughts.

"No action in itself is small,  
None great though earth it fill;  
But that is small that seeks its own,  
And great which seeks God's will."

The law, that the thoughts of a people determine what they are and do, is written in large script in the history and condition of nations.

What makes the difference between England and China in progress and power? The thoughts of their people concerning God. Climate, language, race do not explain it.

What constitutes the superiority of the United States over India? A superior religion, a truer, purer, higher conception of God.

The Puritan and Parisian both loved civil liberty intensely. But the Puritan's creed was "that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." The Parisian's creed was, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." The Puritan, with such a creed, had a passion for righteousness and truth. He made the nation, the Church, the family, society sweet and pure, because he anchored them to God. Everything the Parisian founded was unstable, for it was built on passing sentiments—not as in the case of the Puritan, upon eternal principles.

Macaulay shows that one type of Christianity, on whatever continent found, is always accompanied by a higher civilization—a larger civil and religious liberty, purer morals, and greater wealth and intellectual activity than another type. The type of Christianity that denies the Bible to the common people must always be less as a regenerating force, than the type which gives the Bible to every man and exhorts him to study and obey it. Horace Greeley declares, "It is impossible to mentally or socially enslave a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom."

But let us look at this law in detail.

I. What a man thinks in his heart of God furnishes an index to his character and conduct. The Psalmist thus describes the wicked man: "The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God. God is not in all his thoughts." Job describes the wicked thus: "Therefore they say unto God: Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. Who is the Almighty that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto Him?"

Some one has said: "The Atheist says, 'No God;' the Theist, 'A God.' The Christian, 'My God.' " These three thoughts of God produce conduct and character entirely unlike. His thought of God for the sincere Christian breaks the enchantment and spell of temptation. Well does Faber sing:

"O! how the thought of God attracts  
And draws the heart from earth,  
And sickens it of passing shows,  
And dissipating mirth!

'T is not enough to save our souls,  
To shun the eternal fires;  
The thought of God will rouse the heart  
To more sublime desires.

God *only* is the creature's home,  
Though rough and straight the road;  
Yet, nothing less can satisfy  
The love that longs for God.

O! utter but the name of God  
Down in your heart of hearts,  
And see how from the world at once  
All tempting light departs."

The courage to brave danger and defy wrong comes from a steadfast conviction, not only that God *is*, but that "He is a rewarder of all who diligently seek" and serve Him.

"The land that was the cradle of Christianity would have proved its coffin," if the adherents of Christianity had not *felt* their obligation *to and* dependence upon God.

After our Lord's resurrection and ascension, when Peter and John had startled all Jerusalem with their miracles and preaching, "the rulers commanded them not to speak at all, or to teach in the name of Jesus." "But Peter and John answered and said unto them: Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we can not but speak the things we have seen and heard." "So when they had further threatened them, they let them go. And being let go, they went into their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto Thy serv-

ants that with all boldness they may speak Thy Word, by stretching forth Thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of the Holy Child Jesus." "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness."

I heard the foremost prophet of doubt and unbelief in our age arraign the Church. For two hours he in turn ridiculed and denounced. Finally he described the Inquisition. He said: "If they had put thumbscrews on me I would have said, Gentlemen, I will believe that there is one God or a hundred just as you say; but please do not turn those things again." When the laugh had subsided that this sally provoked, he became serious and continued: "But I want to say that all the progress of the world has been made because there have been men and women who have died rather than play Judas Iscariot to their convictions. We are not naked savages dancing round a camp-fire in the forest to-night, because some men and women have been ready to die for what they thought was right." When Colonel Ingersoll made that admission, he gave away the cause of infidelity. Well has a vigorous English writer writ-

ten: "Infidelity has no very extended martyr roll. Infidels generally write their testimony in a darker fluid than their blood."

In that resplendent roll of the world's great men and great deeds, found in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, we learn what made these men so mighty, for St. Paul goes back of what they *wrought*, to the source of their greatness, when he says: "Who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions; quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword; out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

The patience to bear suffering is born of faith in the wisdom and love of God. Doubt may point to righteousness clothed in rags, and wickedness robed in purple and fine linen; to error received and truth rejected; to wrong crowned and right crucified, and mockingly ask, "Where is now thy God?" But faith with radiant face replies:

"If we could push ajar the gates of life  
And stand within and all God's working see,  
We could interpret all this doubt and strife,  
And for each mystery could find a key!

But not to-day. Then be content, poor heart!  
God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold.  
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart—  
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.

And if through patient toil we reach the land  
 Where tired feet, with sandals loosed, may rest,  
 Where we can clearly see and understand,  
 I think that we will say, 'God knew the best.'"

2. What a man thinks, and as a man thinks of Christ in his heart, so is he. This is the crucial test of all. One of our hymns says:

"Ye can not be right in the rest  
 Unless ye think rightly of Him."

He is the touchstone of the hearts of the children of men. His questions were always of permanent value.

"For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Is not that one of the living questions of our day? If Christ were to ask us a question that would enable us to decide whether we are prepared to work for Him and to witness for Him, would it not be *that* one, or series of questions with which He tested the repentant Peter, "Lovest thou Me?" Is there a more pertinent one for this age of doubt than the last one He proposed at the close of His public ministry, "What think ye of Christ?" Before even that other question, "What will you do with Christ?" you must meet this one, "What think ye of Christ?"



Your attitude toward every doctrine of Christianity will be affected by what *you think* of Him. Suppose we were to challenge Him with the inquiry that the priests and Levites made of John Baptist, "Who art Thou?" that we may give an answer to them that sent us: "What sayest Thou of Thyself?" We have His reply, "Before Abraham was, I AM." "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on Me, though he werè dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." The Scriptures represent Christ as "the Eternal Son, the revelation of God, the First Born from the dead; the Image of the Invisible God; the Creator of all things; the Savior and Example of the world, and the final Judge of all men."

Will any thoughtful man say it can be a matter of small import to him what he in his heart thinks of Jesus Christ; that whether a man adopts Christ's standard of manhood, Christ's rule of conduct, Christ's measure and manner of attaining suc-

cess, will not affect his own value to the world and his destiny ultimately?

3. What *you* think of the Bible, as you think of it in your heart, so are you? Is it the work of men's heads and hands? or, is it the message of God to a benighted and perishing world, groping after light, reaching out for help and salvation? There is not a system of doubt or unbelief that belittles or rejects the claims of Jesus that does not begin by discrediting some part, or rejecting the Bible as a whole. Accept the Bible as the true Word of God, and one logically must accept Jesus as the Son of God—God's best and greatest gift to a lost and perishing world. He who seeks to know the will of God, that he may do it, will soon think with David: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is Thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward."

A year ago the woman who for more than a score of years had made my home the brightest and happiest spot on earth for me, was in great pain and weakness. We knew, she knew, that it was her last Sabbath on the earth. Her faith was undimmed and unshaken for a moment. The Bible that as a little child she had learned at her mother's knee sustained and comforted her. The promises she repeated again and again she never doubted, were the "yea" and "amen" of her Heavenly Father.

Our Lord said, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me." That is what He thought of the Scriptures.

4. As a man thinketh in his heart concerning sin, so is he.

But I am asked, "What is sin?" An old-fashioned definition is, "Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God." Solomon declares that "Fools make a mock of sin." If in my thinking I regard sin, even when gilded and popular, a trifle, I am in serious peril myself, and am a menace to society.

When we reflect that sin is rebellion against God, that its wages is death, we will not regard it as a trifle.

Dr. Charles Wadsworth represents a lad saying to his father, "What is gunpowder?" And the answer is, "Gunpowder is a compound of niter, sulphur, and charcoal." "Lee me see it," he says. And the father exhibits a little black shining dust, as fair and odorless as tiny flower-seed. And the child says, "I see nothing in all this to be afraid of," or "Why should the laws forbid you to manufacture it anywhere, and keep it on sale always? Why may I not have it to play with?" So the parent takes the child out to a mountain side where men are removing great masses of rock. They put a small measure of this odorless and innocent dust into the cleft of a cavern and apply a spark of fire, and, lo! the whole mountain rocks as with an earthquake. And the air is filled with flying fragments of quarry and forest. And the father says, "That is gunpowder." And now the child understands it, and is ever afterward in fear of it.

Dr. C. S. Robinson tells us that once he was taking breakfast in a great institution in Syria erected by American benevolence. On one side of him sat the physician-superintendent; on the other side of him was Bishop Kingsley of our Church, the very picture of health. Dr. Robinson asked the superintendent, "Tell me, Doctor, what is Syrian

fever?" Before he could reply, Dr. Robinson was summoned to join an excursion that would take four or five hours to make. When Dr. Robinson returned he at once noticed that a profound gloom had settled on all that he had left so cheerful and happy. The superintendent in silence took him by the arm and led him to the morgue, and pointing to a body so swollen and blackened that he could not believe he had ever seen it before, said impressively: "That is Syrian fever. Bishop Kingsley, that you left five hours ago, lies there!"

Sin has caused all the fears and tears and pain and woe in the world. It has digged and filled all the graves in the world. It nailed the Son of God to the cross. "It touched one of the shining spirits before the throne, and, lo! he withered into a devil!"

In the language of another: "Sin is a disease of the soul! A paralysis that weakens! A leprosy that pollutes! A plague that tortures! A pestilence that destroys!"

Will a man who sincerely thinks that he can safely sin, make a mock of sin, be saved from the consequence of his evil thinking and doing, be saved by his sincerity?

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Whatever we may think about it, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Any Church that does not proclaim God's estimate of sin, and God's remedy for sin, can not have a large share in the world's salvation.

5. As a man thinketh in his heart about others, so is he. The bad man is quick to think evil and slow to think good of his neighbors. The dishonest man thinks honesty has fled from the place where men traffic and trade. He will tell you that "all men have their price."

The man whose thoughts are corrupt and whose touch is pollution, does not have a very exalted opinion of any woman. It is not a spirit of retaliation, but instinct that causes the world to regard with distrust and suspicion the man who is prone to think evil of others. It is a sign of something worse than mediocrity in one to have only detraction for the competitor who, for the time being, has outstripped him.

6. As a man thinks of himself, so is he. St. Paul reminds us, "For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." An overestimate of one's worth and merit and ability is not uncommon. Such an estimate is a weakness and peril. So an underestimate may be a snare.

I recently read the following: "There are only two rules for good manners. One is always to think of others; the other is never to think of yourself." "Other men labored, and we are entered into their labors." We can never pay our debt to the past.

A friend of mine, with a company of guests, found himself on a street-car without a penny to pay the fares. All the gentlemen of the company in changing to evening dress had left their pocket-books at home. A stranger stepped forward and settled with the conductor. When they asked his address so that they could reimburse him, he replied: "I have found myself more than once in the predicament you are in, and have had my fare paid. You will find some one who has forgotten his pocket-book; just pass it along to him." I think of some who to-day stand with the white-robed. They blessed me with their love. They guided and guarded me, and encouraged and helped me. I never think of them but my heart grows warm. I can never repay them for what they did for me; but *I can pass it along to others.*

Are you asking: "What can I get out of the world? It owes me honor and ease and flattery and place." While these are your thoughts it will never be much indebted to you. But if you are asking,

"What can I give to the world?" I owe it a work and a duty. I congratulate those who love their fellows, that in you they are to find helpers. Spurgeon says, "As you learn, teach; as you get, give; as you receive, distribute."

As you think of God, Jesus Christ, the Bible, sin, others, and yourself, you are. These thoughts will constitute your philosophy of and plan of life.

Last summer in my journeyings I came near the grave of one of America's gifted daughters, and as good as gifted. One of her poems has given us the thoughts that inspired that beautiful, helpful life. She wrote:

"If I can live  
To make some pale face brighter and to give  
A second luster to some tear-dimmed eye,

Or e'en impart  
One throb of comfort to an aching heart,  
Or cheer some way-worn soul in passing by;

If I can lend  
A strong hand to the fallen, or defend  
The right against a single envious strain,—

My life though bare  
Perhaps of much that seemeth dear and fair  
To us on earth, will not have been in vain.

The purest joy,  
Most near to heaven, far from earth's alloy,  
Is bidding clouds give way to sun and shine.



And 't will be well  
If on that day of days the angels tell  
Of me: She did her best for one of thine."

In the light of this law we have been considering, we find that what we have been thinking in our hearts, we are. We are the result of all our thoughts. *What we are thinking, we shall be.* We have been growing better or worse as our thinking has been good or evil. Do you doubt that a thought that has not incarnated itself yet in action has left its impress on us?

I have seen faces so illumined by love and hope that I have had no difficulty in believing that the council long ago, looking steadfastly at St. Stephen, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. I have, on the other hand, seen faces so disfigured with jealousy and hatred that I as easily believed the doctrine that evil spirits sometimes take up their abode in men. If faces can be glorified or brutalized by the thoughts back of them, who can doubt that the sensitive soul responds to them far more quickly than the body?

What a large part in the formation of character the imagination and memory play! There is much more day dreaming than night dreaming. The imagination exerts such an influence, because it con-

stantly, as well as powerfully, appeals to us. Albert Barnes says: "Conduct that would destroy is checked by the restraints of social life; and words that would disgrace are checked by regard to character and reputation. But there are no such restraints in an evil heart. Its workings may be indulged in the presence of others, no matter how pure, no matter how holy. And the process of death may be going on in the soul, in the society of the most lovely and holy, and near the very altars and in the temples of the holy God." Through the imagination and fancy many dangerous doctrines are wildly accepted, because poetry and romance have given them wings. To which class of memories do we submit ourselves? Those that defile and degrade, or those that purify and ennoble? Through the memory one sinful indulgence may repeat itself, until we lose all sense of uprightness or desire for holiness.

"Our dreams are but mirrors of ourselves:  
We shape in thought what soon we dress in deeds;  
And what we daily do within the heart,  
We grow to be."

As a man thinks in his heart, so he will speak and act. For, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

A man has no greater gift to make the world

than a good thought. By these society has been elevated and purified. To change a man morally and spiritually, his thoughts must be changed. "Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him turn unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and our God, for He will abundantly pardon." And when through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost a man's heart is changed, yet it remains for him to work out his salvation by guarding and regulating his thoughts; welcoming the good and finding a place for them in his heart, and resisting and rejecting the evil. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue and praise, think on these things."

Three great branches of the Christian Church never come to our Lord's table without offering the following prayer, which I now voice for you and myself:

"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

## VI.

### WHAT MAKES A NATION GREAT?

*"Righteousness exalteth a nation."*—PROV. XIII, 34.

TO SPEND this half-hour in becoming familiar with the claims of our country and God, that we may be better able to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's, surely must be lawful. Happily piety and patriotism do not conflict in their claims. As some one has said,\* "It is a God-fearing piety that makes a man the best subject of a good government, and the most formidable enemy to a bad one. Animated by its lofty hopes, sustained by its enduring spirit, a true Christian is not the man to sell his liberties for a dishonorable peace nor his birthright for a mess of pottage." There have been patriots who have not been pious men, but religious men have ever proved the truest patriots. There is no time or place too sacred to enforce the lessons of patriot-

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\*Guthrie.

ism. That is a false Christianity that affects indifference to the duties of citizenship. The family and Church are divine institutions. So is the State. Where any one of these three declines or languishes, the prosperity and happiness of society are hindered.

What is the secret of national greatness and permanence? Solomon says, "Righteousness exalteth a nation." What are we to understand by the word righteousness, which the wise man uses in the verse I have just quoted? It means sincere piety and high morality. Sin, the transgression of God's law, is declared to be the shame of any people; righteousness, the keeping of God's law—the opposite of sin—it is affirmed, exalteth a nation, promotes its honor, and tends to its prosperity. Divested of all technical terms, my text means that the true glory of a nation, its security, is the high morality and simple piety of the people as reflected in its laws and customs and practices. God ordained and men organized States to conserve the well-being of man, to protect the good and punish and reform the evil. An earthly government to meet the Divine ideal must be administered so as to promote the well-being of its subjects, physically, intellectually, morally, and spiritually. No one will have the hardihood to dispute, but he is liable to explain away my

text until it becomes meaningless, and to feel if he does not say with the poet :

“No graven image may be worshiped,  
Save in the currency;  
Thou shalt not kill, but need not strive  
Officiously to keep alive;  
Thou shalt not covet, but tradition  
Approves all forms of competition.”

My fear is not that as a people we will contradict with our lips my text, but contradict it with our lives; believe in our hearts that the price to be paid for righteousness in our social or civil affairs is too high.

Men looking at the brief triumph of wickedness may come to believe that dishonesty and injustice can permanently succeed; beholding the tardy reward of a righteous man or the victory of a righteous cause delayed may fall into despair and moan :

“Careless seems the great Omniscient, history’s pages but  
record  
One death struggle in the darkness ’twixt old systems  
and the Word.”

“Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the  
throne;”

But faith sings :

“Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim  
unknown  
Standeth God within the shadows keeping watch above  
His own.”

Profane as well as sacred history proves:

“ They never fail who die  
In a great cause: the block may soak their gore;  
Their heads may sodden in the sun; their limbs  
Be strung to city gates and castle walls,—  
But still their spirits walk abroad. Tho’ years  
Elapse, and others share as dark a doom,  
They but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts  
Which overpower all others, and conduct  
The world at last to freedom.”

There is nothing we can substitute for righteousness without tarnishing the fame and threatening the stability of the State. Some would measure a nation’s greatness and glory by the gold it has accumulated, but this may be the wages of iniquity. The wealthy nations of antiquity were not the long-lived ones. Truth and freedom owe most, not to rich, but poor nations. It is the duty of a government to promote the material prosperity of its subjects, to encourage commerce, mining, agriculture, and manufactories. The lawmaking bodies of the State and Republic are not suffered to forget the material interests of the Commonwealth and Nation. Every industry has its representatives at Albany and Washington to promote and protect it. Many suppose that wealth, no matter how gotten or used, means prosperity. If I were to announce, “Wealth exalteth a nation,” I would have no difficulty in get-

ting a larger number than ever assembled in any church in our city to voice their creed: "All this do we most steadfastly believe." But wealth for the individual or nation, dishonestly gotten or selfishly used, is the precursor of poverty and ruin. Nations were in former times intoxicated with military ambitions. Their supreme struggle is for commercial advantage now. Rome sent her eagles of conquest, their talons dripping with blood, to every known country. France and England have sought to plant their flags on every shore. But nations are now more anxious for commercial gain than for military glory. The world has never seen another nation that in a hundred years has had such material growth. Not long ago three men met in a little room in New York City who had double the wealth that the millions who cast off the yoke of Great Britain had. Mr. Rockefeller probably has three times the wealth that all the Baptists of the world had half a century ago. Foreign statisticians assert that the United States is the richest Nation that the sun ever shone on. The great fortunes of the nobility of the Old World are far surpassed here by those accumulated within the lifetime of a man. We have occasion for thanksgiving for the riches that God has poured out on our country, but we must



remember that they are not our security or glory. How many examples does history furnish of nations that have perished through the corruptions that have been engendered by wealth! Again, intellect alone does not exalt a nation. The intellectual growth of the nation has not been less than its growth in riches. Think of the triumphs of mind over matter in our age. Of the twenty great inventions since the dawn of human history, thirteen belong to the century that closed a short time since. "Steam has been tamed. It rushes across the continent carrying the population of whole villages. It tramples the riotous waves of the ocean into a smooth floor, and makes the seas a great highway of travel and commerce, mountains are bridged or pierced, rivers crossed, and the nation knit together as with literal iron bands." The telegraph stretches its wires across the continent and under the ocean. Steam and electricity have made all peoples to be near neighbors. Recent times have witnessed some of the greatest discoveries, which are only thought of as stepping-stones to new successes. No field of research is being left unexplored. Some are reading the physical history of the world as it is written on the dusty leaves of the earth's strata. Others are digging among the ruins of buried and long-forgotten

cities for information concerning the men and women who once lived there. We are ever and anon sending expeditions to find out the secrets of the frozen North or of the Dark Continent. Because we know more than our fathers does not prove that we are better or greater than they. Under the brain of genius may beat a cruel, selfish heart. It was said of one that "he was at once the wisest and meanest of men." Of another that "he would be the greatest constitutional lawyer of the world if he were not one of the greatest villains." Greece and Rome were never more cultured in literature and art than when they appalled even the pagan nations that surrounded them by their corruptions. "The tree of knowledge may be the tree of death as well as the tree of life."

Train a man's body and mind alone, and you have only a splendid animal. Educate his head and neglect his heart, and you have produced a dangerous villain. There may be great intellectual power where there is neither loyalty to truth, love for man, or reverence for God.

Again, mere numbers do not make a nation great; yet the boastings that followed the reading of our last census reports showed that some thought that our progress in all that is good and desirable can be measured by our growth in numbers. I am some-

times appalled at our increase in population when I remember the character of much of that increase. Nearly a million people from foreign lands sought homes in this country last year. In fifty years we will have a population of over one hundred and fifty millions. That is a conservative estimate. One authority says at the close of the present century we will have a population of over three hundred and fifty millions, a population greater than Europe and Asiatic Russia. Before the century is fifty years old there will be half a score of cities larger than the New York of to-day, while on and around Manhattan Island, at the southern extremity of Lake Michigan, and at the Golden Gate looking out upon a sea that "with its solemn pulse feeds the arteries of the oldest nation of the world," will be three cities as large as London now is. Addition, if it is not of the right kind, is only adulteration. If the nation is not bound together by a sincere piety and a lofty patriotism with areas so vast and interests so conflicting it will perish before the end of the present century. He spake truly who said, "The Christianity of America to save herself must save the world." Not our numbers, but the lofty character of our people, their being inspired by great ambitions and ideals, will make the nation great.

It is not wealth or intellect or numbers that exalteth a nation, but the right use of its possessions and powers.

“Righteousness exalteth a nation.” This is seen to be a necessity when we reflect that He who sitteth upon the throne of the universe is a power that maketh for righteousness.

The individual sinner may prosper in the things of this world and die apparently unpunished, but for him awaits the solemn exposures and awards of the day when God shall judge the secrets of men’s hearts by Christ Jesus. Even David was perplexed when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, and he was not undeceived till he went to the house of the Lord; then understood he their end. But for nations there is no judgment-day beyond this world. God vindicates His justice by their punishment when they sin, and when they refuse to repent by their overthrow. How came the great nations of the past to perish? Their sins brought them low. Their sins were not the same. The sin of one nation was pride, of another intemperance, of another oppression of the poor. No nation was so rich or cultured or powerful that its sins were not overtaken by the judgments of God. Egypt, fearing the rapid increase of her poor slaves, cast the male children of

the Israelities into the Nile. When Pharaoh and his hosts perished in the waters of the Red Sea, did it not appear that the vengeance of the Most High had been only slumbering to give Egypt time for repentance? But I need not go to other times and lands for illustrations that God punishes national sins.

This Nation, that had made the ablest, noblest argument for freedom ever written by a people and waged an heroic warfare for eight long years till their valor was rewarded by success, refused to give to others what they demanded for themselves. Their Declaration of Independence showed that they did not sin ignorantly. The unrequited toil of the unhappy blacks they counted too profitable to be given up. Condemned by the noble example of England, who freed her slaves, and condemned by their own utterances at the time, they threw off the yoke of Great Britain, they held to their sin and attempted to justify it. New York City, bound by close commercial ties to the South, was hardly less proslavery than South Carolina. Slavery was not merely the sin of a section; it was a national sin. We are reminded by a great thinker that ten years before the Emancipation Proclamation there were four classes in this country in their attitude toward this national

sin. One class defended the system because it was profitable. Another class did not want to see it disturbed because it would make trouble. They were for peace at any price. Then still another class admitting that slavery was wrong said it was too strong to be overthrown. The fourth class insisted that not less for the sake of the Nation than for those in bonds the enslaved must go free. The first three classes seem to have forgotten God. Those who were for the system of human slavery because there was "money in it" saw all the gains of oppression lost in a bloody and costly war. Having poured out their blood and their gold like water they failed. Those who were for peace at any price saw this land "plowed by cannon, harrowed by lightning, and planted with the bodies of their noblest sons." Those who insisted that the evil was too strong to be resisted and had washed their hands in invisible water because they could not help—they were not slave owners—and at the same time did nothing to aid those who were trying to quicken the public conscience, found that when God came in judgment they could not escape their part of the punishment. Those who had protested against the great national sin and had been counted as fools and fanatics for so doing, were vindicated by the Provi-

dence of God and the logic of events! Will we profit by that lesson, or must we learn again that the revenues of wickedness in the end impoverish and ruin? I doubt not we often ask, "Is it well with our loved land? What is to be her future?" By my text we can determine her present condition and predict her future. Every departure from the law of God is a departure from the path of honor and safety. The choices of a nation, like those of an individual, determine its character, determine whether it is righteous or unrighteous, and its choices determine its destiny. In the eyes of thinking men Russia's deepest humiliation is not that she has been outfought on land and sea, but that she made solemn pledges guaranteeing the integrity of China, which she never meant to keep. Her persecutions of the Jews humiliates her more in the sight of good men, than her loss of Port Arthur. Godliness is profitable for the nation as well as the individual. Burke was right when he said, "What is morally wrong can never be politically right." Who does not recall Lowell's words:

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,  
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the Good or Evil side;  
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,

Parts the goats upon the left hand and the sheep upon the right;  
And the choice goes by forever, 'twixt that Darkness and that Light."

An unjust law enforced, or a good one unenforced, is an offense in the sight of God. In our land, where the laws so quickly reflect and respond to the will of the majority, unjust laws, or the lax enforcement of good ones, become the sins of those who choose the law makers and law executors. It is a sin to keep unrighteous laws on our statute books. It is a sin not to do all we can to enforce righteous ones. It is not enough to have good laws. Some one has said: "I would prefer to have Lucifer make the laws and Gabriel enforce them, than have Gabriel make the laws and Lucifer enforce them." Let us look at some of the national sins that are a menace to the well-being of the Republic.

1. First in order and importance is the liquor-traffic. Here is the prolific mother of political corruption, pauperism, and crime. More men fall victims every year to strong drink than were slain in the fiercest battle of the Civil War. It costs more to support this traffic than it did to save the Nation. How long will the people submit to pay such a tribute of treasure, tears, and blood? When will deliverance come? It will come as soon as all professed Chris-



tians are as consistent and earnest in their opposition to this evil as its advocates are in support of it. When the faith and works of the evangelical Churches of the United States says to this mountain that is crushing out piety and patriotism, "Be thou removed and cast into yonder sea," it shall be done!

2. The bitterness of party spirit is a menace to patriotism. Parties are necessary, but the public good should not be sacrificed on the altar of party. An eminent "practical politician" of our Commonwealth said some years ago: "If any man has a conscience, let him go to the rear. I do not care how much the Sunday-school members of our party 'squeal' as long as they do not 'kick.' As long as politicians feel that good men will only protest, they will force bad men and measures upon their party. If we vote for bad men because they have the party nomination, and support evil measures because our party advocates them, there can be no reform. Let us seek the good of our country more than the success of our party. Let us adopt Sumner's motto, "Where principle is, there is my party."

3. Vote buying and selling. The most conservative admit that this is a widespread and growing evil. Men sell for a few dollars what cost the life-blood of heroes. The man who sells his vote should

be forever deprived of what he so lightly esteems, and the man who buys votes, instead of being sent to Albany or Washington, ought to be sent to Auburn or Sing Sing. Judge Tourgee has said: "To buy ballots is a worse crime than murder. If you kill, it is but one man. If you kill the life of the Nation, eighty millions of the people and their children must suffer wrong."

4. Sabbath desecration. Listen to De Tocqueville's impressive words: "Despotism may govern without faith, but liberty can not. God's Church, God's Book, and God's Day are the three pillars of American society. Without them it must go the way of all flesh; and God will raise up some other nation or continent to carry on His designs. But with them it will continue to prosper, notwithstanding all hindrances from without and within." We expect that saloon-keepers and infidels will seek to overthrow the Lord's-day. Would that all Christians were blameless in this matter! The late Dwight Moody said, "When Sunday goes the Church goes; and when the Church goes the Republic goes!" To change Sunday from a holy day to a holiday means the speedy triumph of wickedness. Dr. J. O. Peck has shown most conclusively that the Lord's-day as a holy day is a necessity for all forms of social

regeneration. London, the commercial and financial heart of the world, keeps its post-office closed on the Lord's-day, but many of the business men of our provincial cities and even villages must have their mail on Sunday. To make the Sabbath a holiday, is to strike a deadly blow, not only at Christianity, but also at the welfare of our country.

5. Lawlessness as seen in mob rule and lynch law. The guilty have escaped and the innocent have suffered in many instances. The men who take the law into their own hands should be made in every case to feel its terrors. We insist that no man, white or black, shall be punished till by due process of law he is proved guilty. To do otherwise is to sow the wind and reap the whirlwind.

President Roosevelt yesterday said: "No remarkable genius or remarkable brilliancy is needed in governing the United States. What is needed in governing ourselves is exactly the same qualities that make a man a decent neighbor, a decent husband, and a decent father. We can not afford to barter such qualities as honesty, as courage, as common sense, for any amount of brilliancy or genius. We need in public life, we need in private life, to-day just the same qualities that have been needed since the world began."

The hosts that march under the banners of Intemperance, Political Corruption, Sabbath Desecration, and Lawlessness are the foes not only of our Christ, but also of our loved land. Not to oppose them is to be guilty of treason to our country and to our God. They must be met and mastered. As the servants of Him who died to make men holy, and some of you the sons of those who died to make men free, we can and must do it.

Piety and Patriotism summon us to the task of making our country great and glorious by making it righteous.

O America, America, hear thou the word of the Lord!

“And what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?”

## VII.

### UNCONSCIOUS DETERIORATION.

*"And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him."*—JUDGES XVI, 20.

THESE words are the explanation of the overthrow of the giant wit, warrior, and judge of Israel. His name, Samson, means *sunny* or *sunlike*. How well that describes his rollicking mirth, but from the time to which our text introduces us he dwelt in darkness—physical blindness, for the Philistines burned out his eyes with hot iron—and an irreparable, excuseless defeat, caused by his own sin and folly, filled him with shame and self-reproach. Two high priests—one of poetry, Milton; and the other of music, Handel—have seen so much of pathos and tragedy in the career of this strange man, that they each have made him the subject of one of their loftiest productions. What contrasts he presents—thrilling exploits and contemptible weaknesses! Had not the pen of inspiration written the name of Samson in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews among

those who triumphed through faith, many Bible students would have been puzzled whether the good or the evil predominated in his character, and not a few of them would have given him a place with such men as Balaam and King Saul, who wrecked themselves for two worlds.

If we except that of Joseph, probably no life recorded in the Old Testament has such a strange fascination, especially for childhood, as that of Samson. His birth was predicted by an angel. His strength and courage broke the forty years' subjection in which the Philistines had held Israel. By a series of victories, unbroken, he became the hero and popular idol of the tribe of Dan, and the ever-present terror of his peoples' oppressors. The Philistines lost all hope of conquering him in open conflict. Till they could discover the secret of a strength that made him more than the equal of an army of ordinary men, they would avoid him. A woman, Delilah by name, was chosen as the agent of his destruction. She was promised a great reward if she would find out and betray to them what made him so strong. She importuned him to tell her what was the secret of his great strength. He deceived her. His enemies were concealed in the very room where this harlot hypocrite put his story

to the test. While he slept she bound him, as he had told her that if he were bound he would be as weak as other men. Then she stooped over him and cried, "Samson, the Philistines be upon thee!" He sprang to his feet, broke his bonds, and stood ready to battle with the foes he supposed were about to attack him. Again and again the temptress and traitress plied him with her arts, each time discovering that she had not found out what she was so eager to learn.

At last wearied with her importunities and reproaches, his suspicions lulled to sleep by her tears, he told her that he was a Nazarite; that he was a man consecrated to God's service; that he was under a vow, which to that hour he had scrupulously kept, not to drink wine or any other strong drink; that his hair had never been cut. If he were to cut his locks or suffer them to be shorn, it would be the same as saying to God and man that he had repudiated his vow. He was betrayed by Delilah; but he betrayed his secret, so vital to himself and his country, to an enemy of his faith and people. *He was, first of all, self betrayed.* There was something in his manner that convinced Delilah that she had at last discovered the secret that was to bring her great riches, the Philistines their long sought

and long delayed triumph, and Samson irreparable disaster and ruin. Again the Philistines, concealed in the room where Delilah is drawing the net around her stupid victim, wait to spring upon him. He falls asleep. His locks are shorn, his hands bound. Delilah again bends over him with a cry that might well carry terror to his heart, that had never known a fear before, "Samson, the Philistines be upon thee." He springs to meet the enemies he had always triumphed over before, confident of victory, for he wist not, or knew not, that the Lord was departed from him; but when the Philistines bound him, and burned out his eyes, and dragged him down to Gaza, the city that had witnessed his greatest triumph, a poor, blind, shambling captive, the derision and sport of those who had once trembled at the mere mention of his name, he knew then that God was departed from him. Canon Liddon has wisely remarked: "The first thing that strikes us in this account of Samson's ruin, is the possible importance of apparent trifles on the highest well-being of life and character. Samson's unshorn hair told other Israelites what to expect of him, and rebuked in his own conscience all in his life that was not in keeping with his Nazarite vow. The great gift of physical strength was attached to this one



particular of Nazarite observation, which did duty for all the rest. In itself it was a trifle whether his hair was cut or allowed to grow; but it was not a trifle in the light of these associations."

We can not go far in reviewing this life, so different from ordinary lives, and yet having so much in common with them, without leaving the ground of fact and entering the domain of conjecture and fancy. But one lesson lies on the very surface of this history, so plain that he who runs may read, that God's presence and favor insures success and victory. His disfavor means shame, defeat, and ruin. As a key to Samson's triumphs we read, "The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him," and now the story of his defeat and shame is told in our text, "The Lord was departed from him." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" And if God is against us, it matters little who is for us. This should be both a warning and an encouragement. Men tell us that the liquor-traffic is too strong to be overthrown; that it is intrenched in politics, and numbers, and avarice, and appetite. Have these who so say forgotten that the Man of Galilee has a controversy with this evil? He who spake the doom of the barren fig-tree and who said, "Every plant that My Heavenly Father hath not

planted shall be rooted up," will some day wither with the breath of His wrath or cut down with the sharp ax of His judgments this tree of death. It is doomed already, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken its destruction. The individual or organization that begins an undertaking without the favor of God goes out to ultimate defeat, while those who have His favor, though the world is arrayed against them, are on the road to triumph.

I heard Mr. Moody say that if St. Peter had preached the sermon he did on the Day of Pentecost, and the Holy Ghost had not descended on the multitude, the murderers of the Son of God would have been so infuriated by it that they would have exterminated the Church. But the descent of the Spirit tamed and melted them. They felt to oppose Peter and his fellow disciples would be to be found fighting against God. If ever there was a preacher who by his natural and acquired gifts did not need the aid of the Holy Ghost to make him useful and successful, it was Thomas Chalmers. Some of the greatest thinkers of that land of thinkers declared he was the greatest orator since the days of Demosthenes and Cicero. He lived a life above reproach. He pursued his work with tireless industry; but for seven years he was content with the ardent admira-

tion and affection of a congregation that filled his historic church to the doors. He fell sick. Some one put Wilberforce's "Practical Christianity" into his hands. A season of heart-searching and darkness was followed by one of great peace. He came from that sick-room a changed man. The Bible that he resorted to only for texts, now became his constant companion and study. His ministry became as fruitful as it had hitherto been barren. A revival flame speedily was kindled in his pulpit, that leaped all over Scotland. He felt all those who heard him knew that God was with him.

David said: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." St. Paul testifies: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

Why does God depart from men? Because they first depart from Him. If we draw nigh to God, He will draw nigh to us. If we depart from Him, He will depart from us. Sin separates man from God. It may be doing those things that he ought not to do, or leaving undone the things he should do, that causes God to forsake a man who has enjoyed

His presence and favor. What appears a trifle to others, may be the test whether we will obey God or not. I have seen a three-year-old boy, handsome as a cherub, when told by his mother to shut a door defiantly shake his little fist and shout, "I will not." Shutting the door was a trifle; but that mother knew the young rebel must be subdued and "made to mind," or her rule in the home was at an end. Things that you could do without any sense of condemnation after you became a Christian, you can not do now. You have found that they harm you in life and influence. Young Christians are often charged unjustly with unfaithfulness, when they are living up to their light. Be patient with them. They will see these things differently some time. Yet it must be admitted that there is much trifling with light. A woman once came to me, she said, for advice; but every suggestion I made she promptly parried. At last I said to her: "I may be in error in this matter, and giving you wrong advice. Will you when you get home take this matter to God, and ask His direction? Will you ask Him to make the path of duty plain, and promise Him that you will walk in it?" She promptly replied, "No, I will not." She knew what her duty was. She *wanted to get it changed*. She had come, hoping that I

would make some admission or concession that would quiet an otherwise uneasy conscience! The sins that separate man from his God are many and varied. There is many a shorn Samson in pulpit and pew in our days. Here is a preacher whom success or popularity has made vain. He boasts of the size or quality of his congregation. You can not be with him five minutes without his telling you that they had to bring in extra chairs to accommodate his congregation last Sunday night, or that the wealthiest, most prominent people in the community are communicants or pew-holders in his Church. He has long since forgotten that a very important question is, What is a church filled with or for?

Here is another man who once was strong. Jealousy has cut the locks of his strength. He may be stating the truth when he declares that the Church has not recognized his gifts and rewarded his services as they should be recognized and rewarded. He has brooded over his slights, real or fancied, till he finds it easier to rejoice over the failures than the successes of his brethren. Here is another preacher who once spoke with a prophet's voice and spirit. He impressed men, and compelled them to listen to him. By declaring unwelcome and unpopular truth he lost the favor of those who

once applauded and praised him. He forgot God in his hour of trial and temptation. He resolved that he would be more discreet in the future. Henceforth he would express no opinions or sentiments that could get him into trouble. When he so decided he lost power with both God and man. The good angels pity this preacher so fallen. Evil men, while they praise his good sense and liberality, in their hearts despise him. He has evidently forgotten part of Christ's warning, "*Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and My words*, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father and the holy angels."

Churches as well as ministers need to be reminded sometimes that the friendship of the world and worldlings can only be secured by unfaithfulness to Christ and His message. The sermon that makes men who have not sorrowed for and forsaken their sins feel comfortable, may well be suspected. The Church that seeks to win adherents by making the requirements of admission so easy that any one who desires to be respectable has nothing to surrender, will find itself forsaken of God. The Church that does not expose and oppose the sins of its time,

that consents, if not to a formal alliance, at least a truce, with the practices and amusements that have always separated and always will separate lovers of pleasure from lovers of God, will have Ichabod written upon its walls. What shall it profit a Church if it wins favor with the world, and thereby loses power with God? Political platforms have sometimes been framed so as to mean anything or nothing on living issues. Can the Church safely follow those who would have her imitate such a course in her utterances?

It is easy to see how God can depart from a Church, and it be at that very time congratulating itself on its prosperity. There have been Churches since that of the Laodiceans to whom Christ has said: "So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth; because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

But it would be incredible that God could depart from a man and he be insensible of the ruin that must overtake him, if not averted by speedy repentance, were it not for the following facts: No man in his religious life goes from fervor to

indifference in a day or week. Spiritual deterioration is generally gradual. If we were to pass from midday to midnight in the twinkling of an eye, we would be startled by the suddenness of the change; but I, these spring days, have walked along country roads and did not notice when the day closed and the night began. A time came when I was aware that I was walking in darkness. Dr. William Taylor says: "If in a single day the constitution of a man were to give way, and he who left home in the morning 'rejoicing as a strong man to run a race' were to return in the evening hoary and toothless, leaning on a staff and bending under the infirmities of age, he could not fail to be aware of the change; yet, because such a transition is made through the gradations of years, there is little consciousness of the process. Let any one take a series of his own portraits in the different stages of his history—as a boy at school, as a youth at college, as a young man entering business, as a man in his prime, and as he now is on the eve of threescore and ten years—and he will be surprised at the difference between each of these and all the rest. And yet they were all correct. They were all good at the time when they were taken, for he has passed through all these stages, and it is only as he con-



trasts the last of them with the first that he discovers how great the transformation has been."

I have ascended a lofty mountain over a road that the skill of the engineer had seemingly made so near level all the way, that I could hardly believe the testimony of my eyes when I had reached the summit. Nowhere in that journey of more than a score of miles was there as steep a pitch as you will find in the road between here and the next village, winding through a country that has no mountains or high hills. The engineer had learned how to make mountain-climbing easy. He who seeks not to save us, but to destroy us, has learned how to take Christians from an exalted plane of living to destruction without once disturbing their false security by an abrupt fall or even jar.

Then Christians sometimes get so absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure, fame, or riches, that they are insensible of the changes that are taking place in themselves. Our Lord, interpreting the parable of the sower, describes not a few of our own times when He says: "And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness and lusts of other things entering in, choke the word and it becometh unfruitful."

Some are unconscious that they are deteriorating spiritually, because they still adhere to certain things usually associated with a religious life or they follow a religion avocation. Samson, probably, refused to believe that he was departing from the Lord, because he still abstained from wine and was ready to fight for Israel and hated the Philistines! What minister has not been tempted by the suggestion: "Surely it must be well with my soul. Do I not offer prayer and preach the word of God in the public congregation? Do not I administer the Holy Sacraments? A man who thinks about holy things and talks about holy things as much as I do, must be growing in grace!" A man may wear the livery of heaven and hold a foremost place and prominent office in the Church long after he has in heart departed from God. Office-bearing in the Church is not a reliable certificate of soul health or a title to an inheritance in the skies, else our Savior had never said: "Many will say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, *have we not prophesied in Thy name*, and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me ye that work iniquity."

The merchant who, suspecting that he is not

driving a successful business, neglects to take an inventory or strike a balance, is to blame for not knowing how he stands financially. The man who fears that some disease is undermining his constitution, and yet will not consult a physician lest his fears should be confirmed, is no more foolish than the man who, neglecting to examine himself spiritually, goes on self-deceived till the awful disclosures of the judgment-day undeceive him. The man who is blind to signs in himself that he is departing from God, is often quick to interpret these same symptoms correctly when seen in another. He resents as evidence of an unfriendly spirit all attempts to make him aware of his real condition spiritually. I was once pastor of as faithful a votary of fashion as I ever knew. She was a gifted and charming woman. Though a member of the Church, her Church work was limited to attending the Sunday morning service and paying her pew rent. One day on the cars a lady who was a stranger to me introduced herself, saying: "You are, I think, the pastor of Mrs. X. Please convey to her my love and gratitude. I have not seen her in ten years. I am more indebted to her than to all others that I am a Christian. When she was in our village she was the life of our Sunday-school and prayer-meet-

ing. She was never absent from any means of grace when she could possibly be present. Our loss is your great gain." I saw a chance to remind my parishioner of her former activity in Church work without giving her any excuse for taking offense. I improved the first opportunity to deliver the message that had been confided to me. A pained, regretful expression passed over her countenance; then she said, "My religious life in the old days was very fluctuating and uneven. It now flows on even and unruffled." She did not deceive me, and for the moment she did not deceive herself.

"Life hath its changes, 't is death that abideth the same."

I have gone into a home of poverty and squalor. I was ignorant of the history of those who lived there. Suddenly I discovered some rare picture or ornament of exquisite beauty. It told of better days. These people had not always been poor. So I have heard men pray, whose prayers made no more impression on me than did the walking of the sparrows this morning on the roof under which I last night found rest and shelter, till some expression dropped from their lips that told me that their religion in other days had been, not as now, one of form only, but of life and power. Samson's folly

and fall is recorded for our warning. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

What does an honest examination this day disclose? Some one answers, "I am richer in faith and good works toward God than ever before." God be praised! Another laments: "I have been departing from God. I have neglected the study of His Word. I have forsaken the place of secret prayer. I have been utterly indifferent to and careless of the eternal welfare of even my friends and family. I fear having a name to live, I am spiritually dead." Make, I beseech you, David's prayer the cry of your heart: "Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free Spirit." If in earnestness and humility you urge that petition, you will soon be able to testify, "He restoreth my soul, He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

## VIII.

### A WITHERED HAND.

*"And there was a man there which had a withered hand."*—MARK III, 1.

A MAN with a withered right hand had been healed by our Lord. But the rulers looked with evil eyes on the miracle, for it had been wrought on the Sabbath day. It was nothing to them that the man, who had been powerless to help himself or others, was now well and happy. They would not have cared if he had remained a cripple all his days. They had no congratulations for the man who stood there before them able and ready to do his share of the world's work, or thanks for the Master who had made such a change in his condition and prospects. They went out to plot how they might destroy Him who came to seek and save the lost. Those who are always the last to feed the poor, instruct the ignorant, and reform the vicious of their own communities are usually the first to condemn those who presume to contribute to foreign mis-

sions. They are *not remotely* connected in spirit with these critics and would-be murderers of our Lord.

The man with the withered hand, in his helplessness and inefficiency, is the representative of the spiritual cripple who can not work for or defend himself or others. That withered hand disqualifies him for a place among the world's workers or warriors. Some years ago the following question, in substance, as I remember it, was submitted to a hundred of the scientific leaders of the age: "Assuming that the doctrine of evolution is true, will there ever be an animal in our world superior to man?" It was a significant fact that these men, differing as they did in religious belief, declared with consentient voice that there will not be an animal on our globe superior to man—that in him the animal world finds its crown and culmination. In what does his superiority consist? Not in size, weight, or strength. In such a contest he would be far outstripped by many competitors. In swift-ness, keenness of vision or hearing, even some insects surpass him. But give man his brain to reason and plan, and his good right hand to carry his plans into execution, and he has dominion over the tenants of sea, sky, and land. Wither his hand and

he starves or falls a prey to the beasts over which he now wields almost undisputed sway. A man with a withered hand! What a pathetic figure of weakness and helplessness! If you would know the strength of an army you do not count the cripples or those laid up in the hospitals. You count the men who are ready to go on to the battle-field and give a good account of themselves. An army without discipline or devotion to the country under whose banner it marches, is not a defense, but a menace. If all in our Churches who are represented by the man with the withered hand were dropped, what a shortening of Church rolls! What a shrinking of Church figures! Probably not as much as in Gideon's army. One-half or two-thirds would melt away and disappear under the operation of such a method in taking the census. One day I saw in a daily newspaper a picture at the head of the labor organizations of a city. It represented a stalwart hand grasping a hammer. A little below was another stalwart hand grasping a sword. That was the sign at the head of the military organizations. And below that were two clasped hands. They represented the fraternal bodies. I thought, for I had just been reading the story to which our text introduces us, "These are not withered hands."



1. In a world like ours, where there is so much to be done and so few to do it, how many who have promised God and the Church to bear their own and the burdens of others, as far as in them lies, are idle and helpless! Going to Church on Sunday—opening one's ears to hear the Gospel and one's purse to support it, does not constitute a Christian worker. That is more than some professed followers of Him "who went about doing good" ever do. Comparatively few people in every Church do the work done by the Church, and these have no more strength or time or mental ability than those who do little or nothing. In the average Church of five hundred members, ten or a dozen do all the visiting and watching with the sick that is done. A score at the outside is the number that seek out and make welcome strangers. A hundred support the prayer-meeting. If all were to do as one-half or two-thirds do, that Church would speedily disappear. If all the five hundred members of the Church were to be brought up to the efficiency and usefulness of the first fifty, what marvels of growth and expansion we would behold! To get these four hundred and fifty members to become like the first fifty is far more important to that Church and the outside agencies and organizations through which it is to do

its share for the world's betterment than the addition of a thousand like the four hundred and fifty who are afflicted in a greater or less degree with withered hands. There are two Churches that some of you have seen. The younger one has about a hundred members. The other one has about three hundred. The average financial ability of the members of the latter Church is equal to, if not greater than, that of the members of the former Church. Yet that Church is doing more, both at home and abroad, than its neighbor three times are large. That small Church is having a healthy growth. The other one, while it has its present standards and is satisfied with its present achievements, must decline. In one Church the man with the withered hand is in a small minority. In the other he is in an overwhelming majority. In the one Church he is looked upon with pity, he is an exception. In the other the cripple is so common that he is looked upon as the normal type of Christians. He resents any attempts to persuade him to do his duty. He insists that he is doing all that the Church has any right to expect or demand of him. The average man in one Church pays more than the man ten times as wealthy does in the other. The one Church, by its teaching and example, is training its con-

verts to pray and give. In the other, the influence of all he sees and hears is to cripple the young convert in his attainments and achievements, till he finds "his own place" with those who have withered hands. This small Church pays its pastor as much and far more promptly than the one that has three times as many members and three times as much wealth. Through the labors of an evangelist a hundred well-to-do persons were added to the membership of the large Church. It refused to increase the pastor's support. Its leaders argued that there would be deaths and declensions by and by, and that some time they would be back to the condition they were in before the revival! They refused to be moved by the heaven-sent encouragement to plan for and do larger things for the kingdom of God. The shriveling, withering process is taking place there. In one place a modern Caleb and Joshua are the leaders of the official board. In the other the descendants of the ten spies who brought back the unfavorable report from the promised land, are in a great majority. That small, young Church is moving rapidly toward the promised land, while the older, larger one is turned toward the desert! Till its leaders change, or are changed, it is doomed to defeat and decline. The Church that

takes advantage of every opportunity it has to contract in its doing and giving, and that God Himself can not encourage into expansion and enlargement, will wither. Sometimes a pastor is responsible for the selfishness of his Church. He forgets that he is, first of all, the servant of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and not of the local organization. He is preaching in a large and strong Church, because, perchance, Methodists outside of it saved it from ruin and extinction. Now he encourages his people to refuse to help sister Methodist Churches in the same city, who are in dire need of help. Like rich, stingy men, who keep in debt so that they will have an excuse for not giving, he always has something his own Church needs that prevents it giving aid to others! If Methodists in other days had done as he is doing, the Church he is preaching in would not have been. Verily, a Methodist Episcopal preacher who is devoid of a fraternal spirit, and causes his people to forget that we are a connectional Church, is a very expensive luxury to the denomination.

Our district is not unlike hundreds of others in the Church. We have weak charges and strong charges, but we have not a charge on the district that would not prosper if all who have named the name of Jesus "had a mind to work" for Him. The

hearty and general adoption of Bible methods and measures would bring an unparalleled success. A critic of half a century ago said, "Methodism, more than any other body, succeeds in getting its adherents to work. It owes its marvelous growth to this." May not its slow increase at the present time be ascribed to the fact that so many of its adherents have withered hands?

2. A man with a withered hand would do no more with a sword on a battle-field where the red harvest of war is being reaped, than he could on a grain-field with a sickle. How many who give no evidence of withered hands in time of peace, when the battle is set in array are helpless! The sword drops from their hands as they move with great rapidity and promptness to the places that chaplains are supposed to occupy in time of danger, far to the rear. How many who desire the soldier's reward are unwilling to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ! They shrink from the reproach of the cross. They are afraid to be called or regarded "peculiar." They indulge in practices that they know to be wrong and hurtful, because "every one does so." Look at this picture. A Japanese general, during the siege of Port Arthur, is addressing a division of the Japanese army. He

says: "Soldiers of Japan, I desire volunteers to go on an especially hazardous expedition. Probably none who go will ever come back. I do not like to send men to certain death. As many of you as are willing to go take a step forward." As one man that division stepped forward. An equal devotion to the cause of Jesus Christ on the part of all his followers would speedily take the banner of the cross to the ends of the earth. It is a pitiable sight to see the Church commissioned by her Lord to cast out devils, so fearful of them that she is ready to compromise and let them stay if they will only behave themselves and be a little more respectable. In the Bible we read of Eleazar, one of the three chief captains of King David. The Philistines made a sudden incursion to capture and carry off the barley harvest, then being gathered. The people fled before the invaders, but Eleazar, with his comrades, slew or beat off the Philistines. And when he had accomplished his great exploit, he tried to lay aside the sword he had wielded with such effect on that day that gave him deathless fame, but he could not. He had taken such a grasp on the good blade that his hand clave to it. Eleazar had no withered hand. Mr. Moody said in his characteristic way, "The Bible says that one follower of

our Lord shall chase a thousand sinners, and two shall put ten thousand to flight; but in some communities it takes five hundred of our modern Christians to chase one sinner." A witty Federal captain was asked by a young woman if he was sure he had slain any one of the enemy during the Civil War. He replied in the affirmative. He said he was sure a rebel colonel, who had chased him ten miles at the battle of Bull Run, had died of heart failure as the result. Some professed Christians, I know, seem to have adopted the tactics of the captain at Bull Run for destroying the foes of Christ and His Church. They will exhaust any enemy that seeks to get near them, or even find out where they are. How many of the professed followers of Him who said, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," are laughed out of their convictions! It is not to men of such a spirit that the world owes its progress.

In Longfellow's "Michael Angelo," Valdesso, the priest, is represented as saying to Lady Julia:

" You would be free  
From the vexatious cares that come and go  
Through your imagination, and would have me  
Point out some royal road and lady-like  
Which you may walk in, and not wound your feet :

You would attain to the Divine perfection,  
And yet not turn your back upon the world ;  
You would possess humility within,  
But not reveal it in your outward actions ;  
You would have patience, but without the rude  
Occasions that require its exercise ;  
You would despise the world, but in such fashion  
The world would not despise you in return ;  
Would clothe the soul with all the Christian graces,  
Yet not despoil the body of its gauds ;  
Would feed the soul with spiritual food,  
Yet not deprive the body of its feasts ;  
Would seem angelic in the sight of God,  
Yet not too saintlike in the eyes of men ;  
In short, would lead a holy Christian life  
In such a way that even your nearest friend  
Would not detect therein one circumstance  
To show a change from what it was before.  
Have I divined your secret ? ”

Lady Julia replies,

“ You have drawn  
The portrait of my inner self as truly  
As the most skillful painter ever painted  
A human face.”

Lady Julia's question how at the same time to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ and not incur the ridicule and hatred of the world, is the perplexing one for many who live in our day.

3. The open hand is the emblem of benevolence. There was never a time before when man's obligation as a steward was more emphasized than at present. And there was never a time before when



the rich were bringing such large gifts to the cause of education and philanthropy. The aggregate offerings of our Church are increasing rapidly, but it is very doubtful whether our increase in giving is keeping pace with our increase in wealth. Relatively, we are not giving as much as our fathers did. John Mott calls "Christian colleges the strategic point in the world's conversion." He has not exaggerated their importance. The men they have trained for Christ and the men they have won to Christ vindicates their right to the gratitude and generous support of the Church. These Christian institutions of learning have compelled the secular institutions to maintain, at least, a respectful attitude toward Christianity. I can name several Methodists, any one of whom has more money than the more than a quarter of a million Methodists of the Empire State have invested in Christian education. I might name a Methodist who could give as much for Christian education as the nine hundred thousand Methodists of New England and the Middle States have put in their academies and colleges, and then have as much left as he has given. Let the Church open her hand to her schools, hospitals, and orphanages, and she will find the windows of heaven opened to pour out on her a great and lasting bless-

ing. If she shuts up her hand to them she will soon find herself weak and impoverished.

4. Clasped, uplifted hands have ever been the emblem of earnest, importunate prayer. McNeil, commenting on the passage, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit;" says, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and by prayer he reached up and shut the windows of heaven and bolted them, and three years and a half later, when the bolts had rusted, by prayer he reached up and shot back the bolts, and the heaven gave rain." Is it not true that our fathers were mighty in prayer to a far greater degree than their children? If they came to difficulties they "prayed through." Do you know what it is to pray till you can say with David, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles," or "I love the Lord because He hath heard my voice and my supplications?" No Church or individual whose hands of prayer are withered will be strong or successful in the work of the Lord.

5. Clasped hands not uplifted, or belonging to

one but to two persons, are the emblem of fraternity. I have no attack to make on many fraternal bodies outside the Church. I have no objections to improved orders of red or white men. I know some white men who stand in great need of being improved. I may, however, venture the suggestion that the Christian who makes more of his lodge than of his Church, or who finds time to attend the meeting of his lodge, but none to attend the prayer-meeting of his Church, has put things in the wrong order. The Church of our Lord Jesus Christ should be the truest, most prized brotherhood in the world. The undue multiplication of these fraternal bodies I sometimes think is in a measure due to the failure of the Church to do its whole duty in this matter. Many of the charges made against the Church are doubtless groundless and unreasonable. Some of these complaints, however, can not be dismissed as without foundation. Where the hand of brotherly love is withered, there the poor and people in moderate circumstances will feel that they are not welcome. A Church devoid of brotherly love will have little attraction for the masses. When the lodge is more fraternal than the Church, it will have more drawing power. It is not of the members of a dying Church that mer

say, "Behold how these Christians love one another." The late Dr. John M. Reid said that when his grandfather landed in America he had never been in a Methodist church. He went into old John Street Church, in New York City. A class-leader grasped his hand and gave him a warm welcome. When he left another one took him by the hand and gave him a cordial invitation to come again. Dr. Reid said when that class-leader shook his grandfather's hand so cordially on the steps of the John Street Church, "he shook whole generations of Reids into the Methodist Church." After making all allowance for the oversensitiveness of some people, it must be admitted that there are Churches that exhibit a spirit of caste not less to be condemned and shunned because found in America and not in India. May it not be that while the observance of class distinctions is disappearing from India, it is waxing stronger and stronger in America? To the Church that has a welcome only for the man "with a gold ring in goodly apparel," the Carpenter of Nazareth, "who had not where to lay his head," is saying, "I know you not."

6. The guiding, directing hand represents Christian consistency. When that hand is pointed to the

skies seven days of the week, then there will daily be added to the Church such as are being saved.

7. The uplifted hand may stand for the oath of fidelity or the faithful witness.

A hundred men stood in a line in the sixties in California. A man read a few words out of a little book, while each of the hundred held up his right hand. That oath caused most of them to die on the battle-fields of the Civil War. A score of years ago, on a June day, I was in the Coliseum at Rome. There were the arches of the dens from which lions, tigers, and other beasts of prey, looked out with hungry eyes on the groups of Christian martyrs who stood where I was standing. Before I knew it, I had peopled those crumbling stone seats with the eighty thousand Romans who looked with pitiless eyes on saints suffering and dying for their faith. I put Cæsar and his court where they used to sit so long ago. Then in imagination, I put myself with the many men, women, and even children, who crimsoned these sands with their life blood for Jesus' sake, and wondered if I would have been faithful unto death. I was fearful that I would have failed, but that hour did one thing for me. It made me resolve that no one would ever hear me again describe witnessing for Christ in a company

of Christians, as "taking up the cross." What did it not cost to witness for Jesus in those days? You ask me to tell what is the cause of these withered hands? When a doctor does not know the cause of some patient's death he frequently ascribes it to "heart failure." I will be perfectly safe in so diagnosing these cases. These withered hands may be traced in every case to "heart failure." It is not our Lord's will that His people should be cripples. Hear Him say to each weak, inefficient disciple, "Stretch forth thy hand!" An earnest, continuous, believing effort to obey is always followed by the restoration of the withered hand. When He was dying to save us, His enemies taunted Him, "He saved others, Himself He can not save." The hands that were nailed to the cross in that hour of the world's need are not withered, but are mighty to save all who come to God by Him. Remember, the hand that is extended to receive our gifts, or points to the world's ripe harvest fields, is the pierced hand of Him who loves us, and gave Himself for us.



